

BANDWAGON

**THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**

MARCH-APRIL 2001



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The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus elephants parade in front of the Capitol building in Washington D. C. in March 1999.

Photo courtesy of © Feld Entertainment, Inc.

THE BACK COVER

This illustration appeared on the back cover of the 1919 Al G. Barnes Circus courier.

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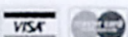
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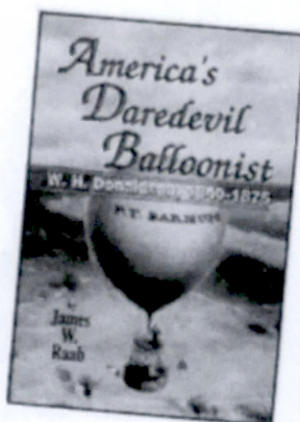
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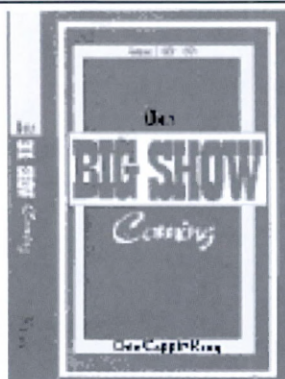
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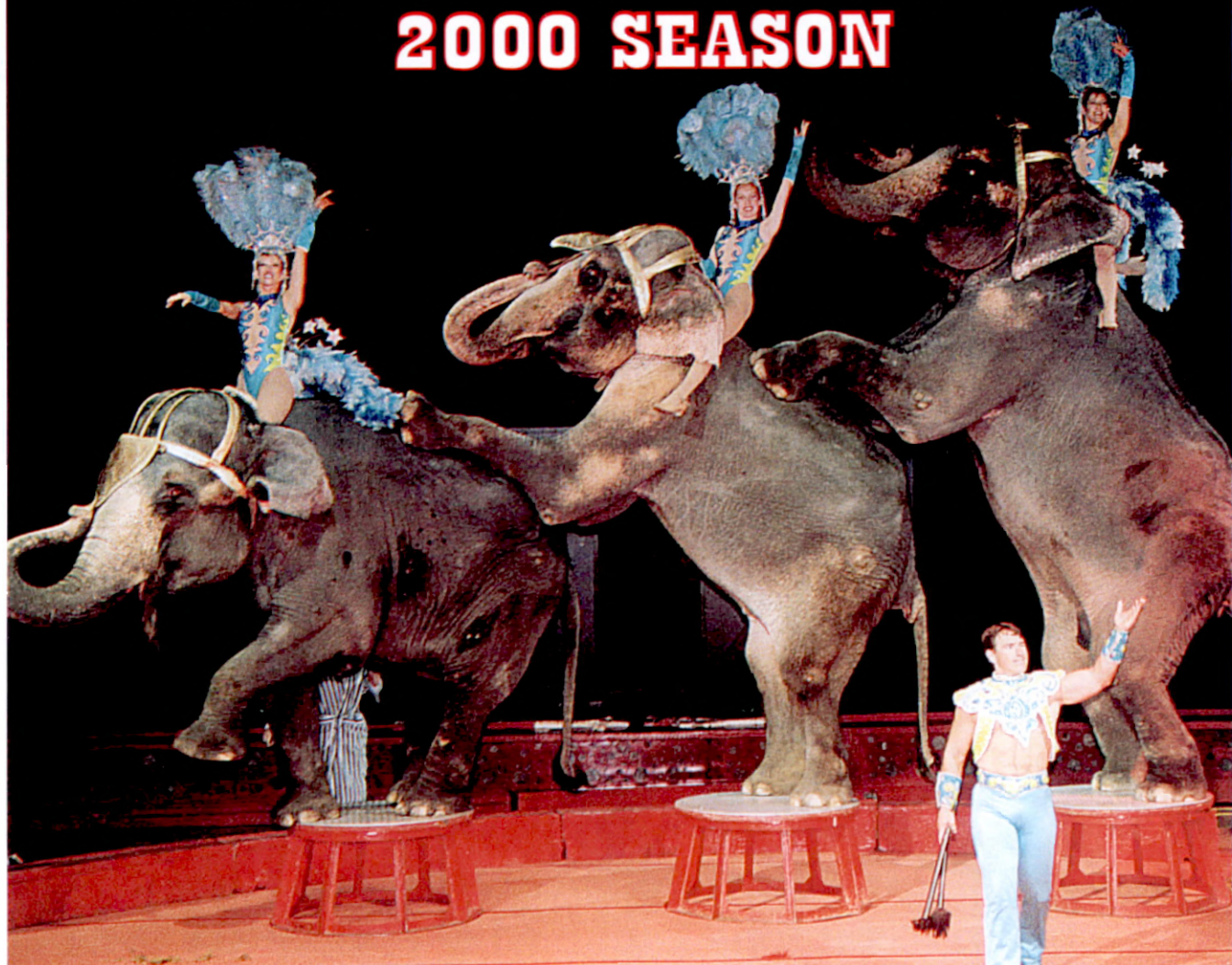
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THE CIRCUS YEAR IN REVIEW 2000 SEASON



BY FRED D. PFENING, JR.

The first year of the new century found the traditions of the American circus much the same as in 1900. The performances included acrobats, aerialists, clowns, and trained animals. In spite of constant protests from animal rights groups, many shows presented elephants and offered elephant rides.

One of the biggest changes was the use of taped music; few circuses had a live band. Those that did used recorded music to augment a keyboard and drums.

The old marketing ploy of distributing discount tickets through local merchants was pushed to a new high. This year's discount tickets went beyond the free child's ducat. A large number of shows distributed kid's

tickets in local stores, offering free admission for children when accompanied by an adult. Even Carson & Barnes and Beatty-Cole distributed the kiddies freebies. Jordan World Circus and George Carden's Atlantic International Circus used kid tickets at still dates. Sterling and Reid Bros. distributed two-for-one adult coupons. Patrons leaving Barnum's Kaleidoscope were given tickets offering \$10 off on \$30 seats and \$5 off on \$20 seats.

Over the years circuses had commercial sponsorships from large corporations, notably Esso, General Motors and Frigidaire on Hagenbeck-Wallace in the 1930s. Kelly-Miller had a national tie-in with Red Goose shoes and Frigidaire in the 1950s. In recent years Sears

The George Hanneford, Jr. elephants at the Swap Shop in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Tim Tegge photo.

sponsored the Ringling-Barnum Circus.

In 2000 General Mills marketed its breakfast products on UniverSoul and Circo Mundial. This was a vertical marketing effort aimed at the African-American community on UniverSoul and the Hispanic community on Mundial. Samples of Cheerios were distributed on UniverSoul and Trix on Mundial. Ford, which displayed its cars at each stand, also sponsored UniverSoul. Lincoln-Mercury, the upscale division of Ford, sponsored Dralion, the new edition of Cirque du Soleil.

The earlier Quidam edition was



The Quiros, double high wire, in the Ringling-Barnum 130th edition. Fred Pfening photo.

sponsored by Michelin tires.

The old tradition of local banner sales had gone by the wayside. No tented shows displayed, sold or displayed local banners in the big top or on the backs of elephants, although some Shrine circuses did.

The year saw four tent circuses, Sterling and Reid, Walker Bros., Star Bros., and Vidbel, playing indoor routes before opening under canvas.

A logistical change saw the use of contract haulers to move circus semi-trailers as opposed to show-owned trucks. The Big Apple made the change some years ago. Cirque du Soleil followed. UniverSoul, Circus Hope and Barnum's Kaleidoscape all used commercial haulers.

There were fewer web sites on the Internet in 2000. The largest was Ringling-Barnum which updated its site each day. Printed route cards were no longer published as the

The Bell Wagon in the Ringling Atlanta parade. Richard Reynolds photo.



route was listed on the web site. Other shows with web sites included Carson & Barnes, Kelly-Miller, Cirque Du Soleil, Garden Bros., Big Apple, Gamma Phi Circus, the Flying High Circus and Make A Circus. The Circus World Museum, the Circus Fans of America and the Circus Model Builders also had sites. Graphics 2000,

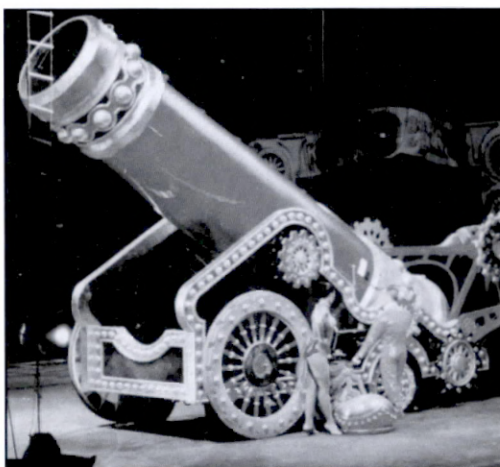
the Las Vegas-based circus printer, had an extensive site that included Windjammers, New Pickle Circus and a number of others.

Feld Entertainment, Inc. operated the red and blue units of Ringling-Barnum, Barnum's Kaleidoscape, Toy Story on Ice, 75 Years of Disney Magic, Disney's Little Mermaid, The Wizard of Oz on Ice, Grease on Ice and Siegfried and Roy in Las Vegas.

The Ringling-Barnum blue unit traveled on four stock cars, thirty-three coaches, two container cars and seventeen flats. It opened on January 5 in the Tampa, Florida Ice Palace. Brian Cristaini was the new elephant superintendent. David Killinger was bandleader. Michael James McGowan was ringmaster.

Features included the Living Carousel; clown John Weiss, ladder balancing and cannon act; the Quiros, double high wire; Michelle and Alexis Ayala, hair hang; Sara Houcke, tigers and liberty horses; the Chinese Jinan bicycle gymnasts; Zemintof troupe, giant bicycle; Hans Ludwig Suppeier, horse and zebra at liberty; and the Flying Tabares.

With all of the pressure from animal rights groups, producer Kenneth Feld is to be commended for continuing to present a variety of animal acts. A circus is not a cir-



The remodeled cannon used by Jon Weiss in the Ringling-Barnum blue unit. Fred Pfening photo.

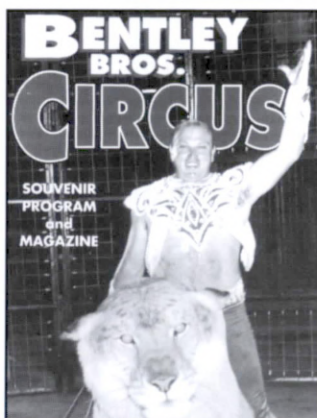
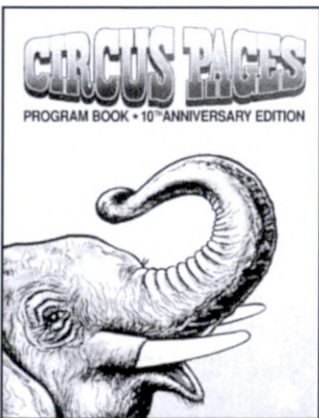
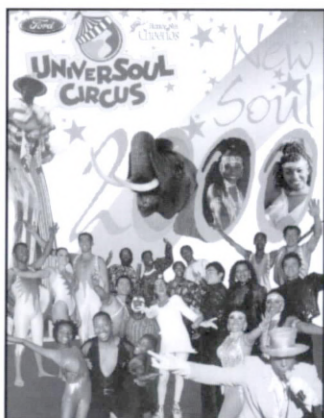
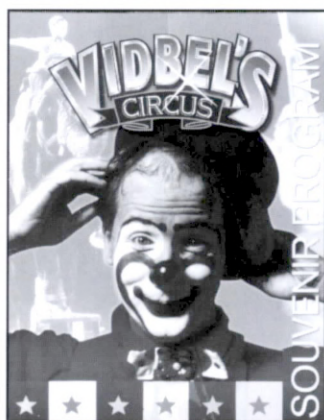
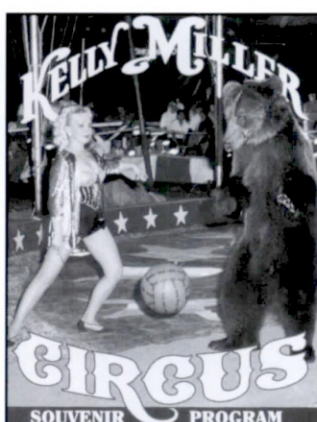
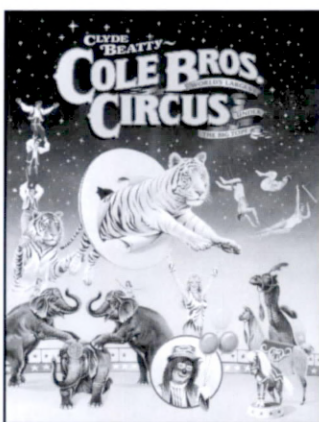
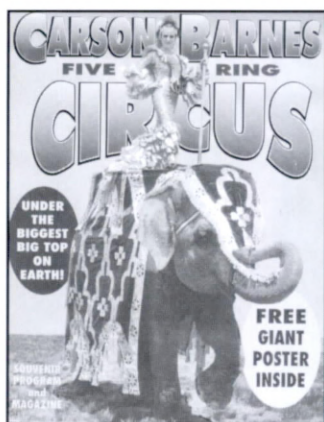
cus without animals.

Ringling-Barnum's red unit, in its second tour, traveled on four stocks, 32 coaches, two container cars, sixteen flats and one bi-level car. It opened on January 5-9 in Sunrise, Florida.

On February 21 the Big Show staged a parade in Atlanta using seven horse-drawn wagons from the Circus World Museum. They were the John Robinson No. 1 bandwagon, J. H. Eschman Sea Shell tableau, the Christy Beauty tableau, the Carl Hagenbeck Lion's Bride, the Barnum, Bailey and Hutchinson tableau cage, the Barnum and London Old Woman in the Shoe pony float, the Royal Italian bandwagon drawn by a Dave Hale camel hitch, and the Ringling Bros. Bell Wagon. The Dave Morecraft steam calliope was pulled by a Circus World Museum Cat tractor. In addition most of the show's animals were in the march, including 14 elephants, 38 horses, and four zebras.

A Ringling-Barnum tiger cage. Richard Reynolds photo.





Michigan; Pittsburgh; and Atlanta before heading for Manhattan.

The show opened its big New York City date on November 21 in Bryant Park at 6th Avenue and 42nd Street. This was a wonderful location next to the New York Public Library. During the engagement the trailers were stored in New Jersey.

The December 2 New York Times reviewed the performance. Writer Lawrence Van Gelder wrote: "Lucky New York.

"Its cornucopia of top-notch entertainment has grown just a little fuller.

"The new addition is Barnum's Kaleidoscope, the big-time one ring circus filled with superb acts that has pitched its red-and-white spired tent through December 31, in Bryant Park, where even jaded New Yorkers are likely to find themselves dazzled.

"... But make no mistake about it; Kaleidoscope is no watered-down version of tradition. It is an all-star show distilled from some Ringling Brothers' and the circus world's most brilliant talents and enhanced

Sylvia Zerbini signing autographs after a Kaleidoscope performance. Fred Pfening photo.

A selection of 2000 circus programs. Courtesy of Al House, Tim Tegge and Bill Biggerstaff.

On March 27 another parade was given in Washington, D. C., also using wagons from the Circus World Museum. A third parade was given in New Haven, Connecticut on March 22. The wagons were not the same in the three parades.

While the show was in San Antonio, Gunther Gebel became ill. It was determined that he had a brain tumor. His family considered surgery in Houston but then decided

to have the operation performed in Sarasota where it took place on July 3. Gebel spent the rest of the year recovering under his daughter's care.

When the show played Dallas on July 30, Gerardito Fernandez, a Mexican television star, was added for a special post-show concert.

In San Antonio Pedro Carillo Jr. set a new record for the Guinness book of records by jump roping 789 times on a high wire.

Kaleidoscope continued into the New Year, playing Dallas; Chicago; Cleveland; Southfield (Detroit),



by the intimacy of an 1,500-seat setting that focus and leaves no member of the audience more than 50 feet from the ring.

"To begin with, there is David Larible, the master clown with his red nose, baggy checked suit and bulbous shoes.

"Splendid as he is, Mr. Larible has plenty of company. Sylvia Zerbini, for example, is not content with dangling by a heel from a trapeze over the net less ring and performing other acrobatics feats with such seemingly effortless grace.

"But no sooner does she finished her taxing act than a great off-white horse speeds into the ring, trailing a gossamer gown from its flanks. And then donning the gown proceeds to put half a dozen steeds through a ballistic performance.

"And for a wow finish there is Guy Tell, a simply amazing crossbow marksman who concludes an already hair-raising performance with his partner . . . by setting off a chain reaction of a dozen bows that ends with an arrow, traveling at blinding speed, splitting an apple atop her head."

Van Gelder continued with glowing comments on other acts in the show. He concluded: "This is a big top show that will be hard to top."

The December 26 New York Times compared the three New York circuses, Kaleidoscape, Big Apple and Circus Oz. It stated Kaleidoscape sat 1,850, Big Apple 1,722 and Circus Oz 499. Kaleidoscape had ten horses, 25 geese and nine ducks, Big Apple had nine horses and four dogs; Circus Oz had no animals. The admission prices were \$25 to \$75 on Kaleidoscape, \$15 to \$62 on Big Apple and \$10 to \$35 on Oz.

Kaleidoscape ended its tour in New York City. Following the final performance on December 31, the entire company was advised that the show was closing. In the January 3, 2001 New York Times Kenneth Feld stated that it was a momentary break that would enable the creation of a new show. The sixty-odd semis were sent to the Ringling train recycling facility in Palmetto, Florida.

In other Ringling news, Tim



Bello Nock as pictured on the Big Apple program.

Host, Vice President for production and talent, married Lisa Dufense, an animal trainer, on May 27 in Tampa, Florida.

In 1984 Guy Laliberte founded a small government-funded circus in Montreal. He called it Cirque du Soleil. Since its small beginning the operation has grown to seven units playing around the world. On a typical weekend as many as 50,000 people attended one of Soleil's performances.

As the company grew into a multi-million dollar operation it found commercial sponsors and abandoned its public support. The new show *Dralion* was sponsored by Lincoln

The Cirque Du Soleil building in Orlando, Florida. Arnold Brito photo.



automobiles. This production featured 56 artists from eight countries, including 37 Chinese acrobats. The performance included loop diving, bamboo poles, juggling, tetterboard, double trapeze and rope skipping.

The various shows played Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Atlanta, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Berlin and Vienna. It was the first circus ever to simultaneously play North America, Europe and Asia.

In 2000 resident units appeared in three cities. *Mystere* was at the Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas; tickets were \$80; "O" was at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas; tickets were \$90 to \$110; *Alegria* was at the Beau Rivage hotel in Biloxi, Mississippi; *La Nouba* was at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida; tickets were \$67. *Quidam* was in Europe; *Saltimbanco* was in Asia and the Pacific Rim; and *Dralion* toured the United States. Guy Laliberte was listed as "guide" in the programs of all units.

The Big Apple Circus opened its new show, *Bello and Friends* in Lincoln Center on October 19.

The Big Apple Circus's summer season opened in Atlanta on February 23 and played there through March 5. Opposition included UniverSoul, Ringling-Barnum and Cirque Eloise.

The French-made, European-style big top was 138 feet in diameter and 52 feet at its highest point. The average seating was 1,700. Two big tops were carried, a blue one in colder climates and a white one in warm weather. The big top was heated in winter and air conditioned in the summer. Twenty-seven semi-trailers move the outfit. A new innovation was the use of a three-piece Dixieland band in the reception tent and a band organ on the midway.

The performance was built around Bello Nock, who did sway pole, trampoline and a number of audience participation numbers. Katja Schumann's horse number utilized a medieval theme; Violetta

Amestica's act included dogs and house cats. Hernan Amestica presented a hand-balancing act. French clown Francesco did a musical number. Julian Stachowski and Regina Dobrovitakaya presented a hand-balancing act. Buckles Woodcock's Anna May and Ned were the elephants. The final performance in Shelburne, Vermont signified the end of a long-term association of Big Apple and the Woodcock family.

The show, responding to animals rights groups, announced that it would no longer present elephants. Ringling veteran Dinny McGuire was announcer and vocalist. Paul Binder was ringmaster.

Bello and Friends gave 220 performances in eleven cities. The longest stand was in New York City and the shortest was in Hanover, New Hampshire. It closed in Shelburne, Vermont.

Upgrading of equipment included new sleepers and a new generator. The trucks were repainted white with bright stars. The staff included Paul Binder, ringmaster; Guillaume Dufresnoy, general manager; Felipe Teran, director of operations; and Adam Spencer, tent master.

Oops, the Big Apple stage show, continued the tour begun in late 1999. It played the Providence Performing Arts Center, February 25-27, and was in Lansing, Michigan, April 14 to 16.

Cedric Walker's UniverSoul Circus opened in Miami, Florida on January 31. Jacksonville followed before playing Atlanta, February 25 until March 5. It was then in Tampa, February 9-13. Billed as the "New Soul 2000" edition, the performance sparkled with a wonderful new lighting system, equal to any on the road. The European big top was sixty feet across and had twenty rows of high chair seats. Commercial sponsors were Burger King, Cheerios and the Ford Motor Company. The taped sound system was high quality. UniverSoul had a very strict policy of no cameras, video or tape records. Several announcements were made



The entrance to the UniverSoul big top. Fred Pfening photo.

on the midway advising that anyone in the big top with this equipment would be ejected along with their whole party.

High wire walker Willie Mesa fell thirty feet in Tampa, breaking a hand and hurting his head.

The acts included Johnny Lam family, chimps; Prince Malatsi and son, acrobatic art; Jose Olate, dogs; Mocko Jumbie, dancing and stilt walking; Willy family, high wire; Ricardo Sosa, hand balancing and contortion; Dragonmasters, break dancing; Pierre Smenie with three Tarzan Zerbini elephants; Luna, contortion; and Gabonese tettersboard act.

The African Air Soul flying act pictured in the program left the show in mid-season.

Throughout the performance a man with a flash camera went through the audience snapping photos. He then returned selling key chains with an individual photo for \$5.

The show played Columbus, Ohio for the first time in May to packed houses. All of the trucks were highly decorated. The circus came from Cleveland where it had day and dated Barnum's Kaleidoscope. All staff people were dressed in black suits, white shirts and ties. The show moved using contract trucks.

The Canobio big top was in its second year. An unusual addition was a shop tent with welding and a metal working equipment for repairs on the road.

In a television interview owner Walker stated that he would next like to have an all black ice show.

The long coast to coast season took the show to Greensboro and Charlotte, North Carolina; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; New York City; Newark, New Jersey; Cleveland; Columbus; Cincinnati; Minneapolis; Milwaukee; Louisville; Nashville; Memphis;

Indianapolis; Birmingham; New Orleans; Jackson, Mississippi; Little Rock; Kansas City; St. Louis; Detroit; Chicago; Los Angeles; Houston; Austin; and Dallas where it closed on November 26.

Having observed the success of Cedric Walker's UniverSoul with the African-American community Ed Migley framed a new tent show marketed to Hispanic audiences. He, like Walker, found a national sponsor. General Mills signed a multi-year contract to have its Trix cereal promoted on the circus. The show was titled Trix Circo Mundial, the National Hispanic Circus.

A big Trix Bunny mascot sat atop the European-style big top. All of the announcements were made in Spanish as well as English. The circus carried large air conditioning units. All of the trucks carried flashy lettering. One observer said the show looked like first class major circus from Mexico.

The outside of the big top was well displayed with lots of lights. The trucks were colorfully titled. A fence encircled the lot. A 60 by 120 foot concession tent was used. The big top was heated or air-conditioned and all trucks were new. General admission ticket holder sat on bleachers and the reserves were plastic chairs.

The opening was in Hartford on May 31. It then played New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, Phoenix, El Paso, Dallas, San Antonio, Houston and Fort Worth.

Music was taped. Ed Migley was producer and Luis Munoz was performance director. The acts included the Kenya acrobats; dancing Trix

rabbit; the Zangaro troupe of five with hoop jumping, pyramid building; Jim Zajick and four Cuneo elephants; Garza, statue act; Alarxon musical clowns; Ayak brothers, aerial act; Douglas and Oliver Ramos, strap act; Ramos family, risley; Armando Loyal's bareback riding act; Bautistas, teeterboard act and double space wheel; Flying Espanas, trapeze act; Dalton and Louise, rola bola.

Gary Nelson, an African-American businessman from Atlanta, also was inspired to produce a knockoff of UniverSoul. It was titled the Afro Centric Circus. Sawdust icon Junior Ruffin was in on the early planning of the show. Without any equipment Nelson scoured the country to lease a big top and seats. A deal to use the Vidbel equipment fell through. Nelson then hooked up with Tommi Leibel; that didn't work out either. Although he planned to open the circus in an Atlanta shopping mall in December, it didn't happen.

The larger well-known truck circuses had a good year, mainly playing familiar routes.

The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus opened in Deland, Florida on March 6 and 7. A new big top was used, replacing the one used the prior two years. The yellow color on the old tent had faded to a mustard brown. Semi-trailers were parked around the tent as anchors and provided a buffer in strong winds. The trucks parked around the big top were the mechanics, tent, prop, concessions and ticket semis; and a straight truck, clown prop and dressing. The show carried eight steel masts, plus a spare, that served as center poles. The masts were erected using electric motors. A tractor-mounted generator provided the power.

A Caterpillar forklift loader replaced the old truck mounted stake driver, dating back to the John Robinson Circus, with a hydraulic driver that could be removed for use as a lift truck for canvas. The driver, original-



The Trix Circo Mundial European-style big top. Arnold Brito photo.

ly made for cracking concrete, made a faster and better stake driver than those used on most circuses. The old truck and stake driver were donated to the Circus World Museum.

There were 3,000 seats including ten reserved sections of fourteen rows each. Two rows of VIP chair seating were in front and center, costing \$25 each. General admission was \$9 for children and \$14 for adults. A program was sold for \$3. It was refreshing to see the Bruce Pratt-produced publication available at the opening performance.

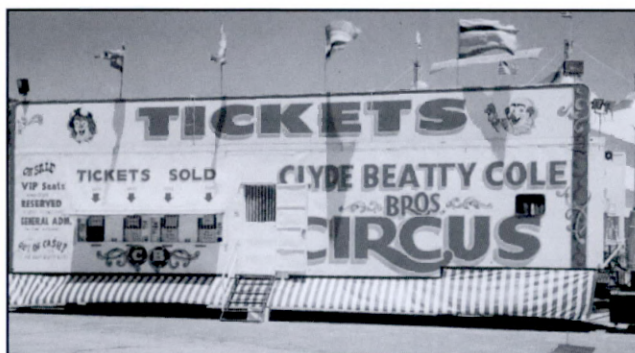
Bonnie Bale and Jimmy James did the announcing. The acts were Susan

The Mundial ticket wagon in Englewood, California. Jerry Cash photo.



Lacey with eleven Hawthorn tigers; Motor Psychos, aerial motorcycles; Casalions clowns; Gloria Bale, liberty horses; Dukovi troupe, teeterboard, gymnastics and Russian swing; Yevgeni and Jayson Walker, juggling; spec; Laura Herriott, llamas and miniature horse; Russian Air Force, flying act; Aleksander, cloud swing; Adam Hill with elephants and Miro Pamoukov, cannon.

The circus played its usual route up the East Coast, but in September left the Washington, D.C. area and headed west to again avoid the Gulf and Florida area during hurricane



The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus ticket wagon. Sally Harwood photo.

season. The route took the show to western Pennsylvania, Ohio and Kentucky. By October 1 it was back south at Dalton, Georgia. The end of the season was marred by an accident on Route 75 on November 22 near Brandon, Florida. A pickup truck struck a circus bunkhouse trailer.

The show closed on November 21 in Coral Ridge, Florida. It visited seventeen states. Twenty-two towns were played in Florida and ten in New York. The southern most stand was in Miami on November 2 to 5 and the most northern point was South Portland, Maine, July 5-7. Total mileage for the season was 10,138.

Geary and Barbara Byrd's Carson and Barnes Circus opened on March 18 in Paris, Texas. Ralph and Susan Gifford handled the heavy advance billing. John Moss was ringmaster. A new big top was delivered to the show in Emporia, Kansas on May 8. The new red and white striped top was 130 by 310-feet in size. It allowed seating for 2,000. While making adjustments to the new canvas the old tent remained on the spool truck. The new tent was bailed and carried on a flat bed semi until it went into use.

Jennie, the baby elephant, trained by Joe Frisco, stole the show with a wonderful routine. Frisco was also in charge of show's seventeen elephants. An outstanding feature of



Carson & Barnes side-walled in Carwonsville, Maryland in July. Don McGarvey photo.

A cookhouse, operated by the Ramos family, was a new addition to the show. The circus was in Santa Barbara, August 7 to 15. Three different lots in Las Vegas were played from October 11 to 29.

A large one ring blue big top housed the performance. Fencing enclosed a large ticket wagon on the midway. The midway included a petting zoo, pony rides and a concession trailer.

James Ducker was ringmaster. The performance include clown

Valery Serebryakovo and western whip act; Raos, globe act; Alberto Zoppe, riding school; Luciano Anastasini, dog act, Diablo routine and rocket ship; Deanna Arthur, liberty ponies; Elena and Lud Shakib, strap act; the Quirros, high wire; and Chip Arthur, elephant Lisa.

Sterling & Reid Bros. Circus opened its season indoors in Dothan, Alabama on January 13-14. The show played Bristol, Tennessee on January 22. By February 14 it was in Danbury, Connecticut. Jacqueline Zerbini was office manager. Other staffers were Peter Luvas, manager; Dutch Crawford, performance

director; Tuffy Nicholas, concession manager; Ginny Frisco, elephant superintendent; Doady Fornasari, ringmaster and announcer.

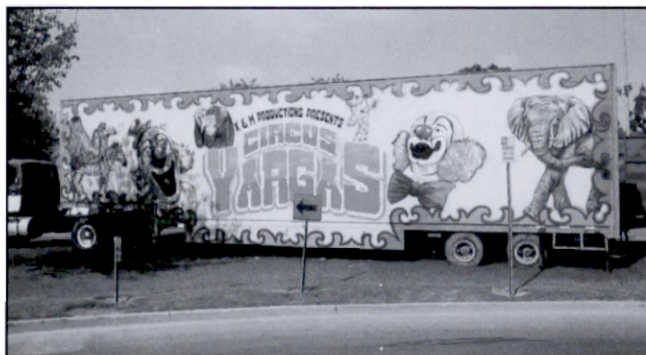
The under-canvas show opened in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and played New Orleans from March 29 to April 2. By April 8 it was in Galveston, Texas. It played Texas until April 23 and then moved into New Mexico for three stands. On April 26 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 600 patrons were removed from a straw house by the fire department. A fight broke out and the show was forced to refund about \$2,500. On April 28 it was in Trinidad, Colorado. Dates in Wyoming, South Dakota and Iowa took it to Moline, Illinois on May 25.

A truck with a loud speaker at the entrance to the midway carried lettering "Circus Today." The midway contained the ticket semi; a pony sweep; a Titanic inflatable slide; a moon bounce; a diner; a flashy truck-mounted shark show and elephant ride.

Around seventeen trucks were elaborately painted with the title and scrollwork. The 120-foot big top with three 40-foot middles, received late in the 1999 season looked brand new. The liberty horses were stabled in box stalls under a tent. Seven semis provided seating. White plastic chairs filled two rows in front of the center ring.

A new 26-foot straight bed truck

Sterling & Reid Bros. deep in mud in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Harry L. Kingston photo.



A Circus Vargas semi-trailer in Huntington Park, California in June. Jerry Cash photo.

the performance was the Cavallini family tetterboard act, using ten people.

On September 7 it played Bloomington, Illinois where it welcomed the Circus Historical Society during its convention. The circus held a reception for the CHS in the cookhouse after the matinee.

The season closed in Broken Bow, Arkansas on November 5. It played in twenty states and made twenty-five two-day stands. Total mileage was 13,122.

Roland Kaiser and Joe Muscarello's Circus Vargas, in its 31st edition, again played Southern California early in the season.



outfitted as a cookhouse provided meals for all employees under a dining top.

The acts included Nicholas Winn, wire walker; Kim Chepkiakova, Russian bears and horses; Nidonken Duo, Russian bars, comedy tennis and rope jumping; Elito Forasari, musical clown; Vilan, Russian strap act; two girl tiger illusion; Christine Zerbini, aerial lyre and liberty horses; the Espanas, motorcycle on high wire and Russian swing; Villin; Marrakesh Troupe, acrobatic tumblers; Joe and Ginny Frisco with three elephants. Performance director and horse trainer Dutch Crawford left the show early in May.

The troupe experienced bad weather and regulatory challenges in Wisconsin late in May. Due to rain and a muddy lot attendance was down in Union Grove on May 30 and 31. The night performance was canceled by the threat of tornadoes on June 1 in Beaver Dam. Inspectors in the Milwaukee suburb of Franklin-Hales Corners prevented the use of seat wagons. In a bind, the show paid \$4,000 to rent temporary bleachers.

It went back into Illinois and then headed to Indiana on June 12. It was in Michigan from June 17 to 25. From June 26 to July 5 it was in Ohio before playing Pittsburgh on July 9. By July 14 it was in New Jersey and then returned to Pennsylvania for a few dates. The New England states were played through August 24.

Yorktown Heights, New York was played August 25 to 27. On August 30 the show moved to the Big Apple, playing the Randall's Island Stadium parking lot for five days. The show moved to Staten Island for three days, September 5 to 7. A few additional stands in New Jersey and Delaware took it to Maryland. The show closed the season in Ft. Myers, Florida on November 5. It was out for 46 weeks.

In July Dick Garden expanded his entertainment activities with the purchase of Ice Capades. He debuted the venture from September 21 to 25 in Auburn Hills, Michigan. The show was booked into large and medium sized cities. It did fine in the smaller locations but had trouble in the large



Nellie Hanneford Poema and her liberty act at the Westchester County Fair, Yonkers, New York. Paul Gutheil photo.

buildings. It closed after a short run.

Tommy Hanneford was president of the Royal Hanneford Circus, and wife Struppi was treasurer and business manager. Kay Parker was assistant to the president and musical director. Dwight Hanson was general superintendent and boss canvas man.

The company-produced circuses played over 400 show days in 103 locations, using four big tops and sixteen semi-trailers. Hanneford covered the spectrum of the circus, indoor and outdoor. It played a number of double dates in different cities, with as many as four stands at the same time.

A new elephant trailer was acquired, but stayed in winter quarters due to the elephants being quarantined.

Nellie Hanneford Poema introduced a new liberty horse act trained by John Herriott. It included six Arabian horses and six black Shetland ponies.

Hanneford had a beautifully landscaped layout at Wyandotte Lake, next to the Columbus, Ohio Zoo from July 31 to August 12. First was the Bedazzled magic show, then

an ice show and finally a circus featuring Nellie Hanneford Poema and her liberty horses and ponies.

Another resident summer show was at Adventure Land in Des Moines, Iowa.

Royal Hanneford opened the season at a fair in Miami, overlapping the South Florida fair at West Palm Beach on January 14-30, under its large European big top. Billy Martin was ringmaster and the acts included Mark

Karoly, elephants and riding acts; Smirnovs, quick change act; Angel Martin, aerialist; three Mongolian balancers; Olga and Velladamier, perch and strap act.

Hanneford played the Shrine date in Morris Plains, New Jersey, early in May. The acts there included Brian Franzen, cat act and elephants; Gabriela Guzman, single trapeze; clown Smiley Dailey; Mark Karoly, riding act; Raul Castafio, dogs; the Moroccan Connection, balancing; Gena Shvarsman, juggling; Gwi Ming Meng, vase juggling; Oulianov Duo, aerial cradle; David Moss and Dania Kaseeva, quick-change act; and Roman Tomanov, strap act.

The Sarasota, Florida, Shrine Circus was produced by Hanneford on April 13 and 14. David Moss was ringmaster and the acts included clown Cesar; Brian Franzen, wild animal act and elephants; Miss Luisa, Roman rings; the Moroccan

The Hanneford Bedazzled magic show at the Columbus, Ohio, Zoo. Fred Pfening photo.





The Kelly-Miller red and blue European-style big top in Frederic, Maryland. Ed Meals photo.

Connection, pyramid builders; the Marinofs, cradle act; David and Dania, quick change act; Mark Karoly, riding act; Roman Tomanov, aerial act; and the Frisco elephants.

The Hanneford organization continued to be a major player in producing circus and magic shows for major fairs including the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts and the Florida State Fair in Tampa. The season closed in Fayetteville, North Carolina on December 6.

The medium-sized truck generally found the season's business satisfactory.

The David Rawls owned Kelly-Miller Circus opened in Hugo, Oklahoma on March 18. Bill Brickle was ringmaster. Amy Christian was office manager and Sasha Rawls Fry was treasurer. Chris Backett was 24-hour man.

Tom Tomashek, bandleader, had four men. The acts included the Perez family, flying act; Billy Morris,

Bentley Bros. Circus in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida. Harry L. Kingston photo.



elephants; Kevin Ryan and Justin Loomis, clowns; Ed Steeples, chimp act; Perez girls, perch act; Bill Brickle, dogs; Stephanie Darr, aerial rings; Perez family, Russian swing; Sylven Steeples, birds; Billy and Libby Morris, elephants; Raul Olivares, juggling; and Gullerno Perez, space wheel.

The show played Connersville, Indiana, on May 13. The midway included a ticket wagon, a snake show, a pony sweep, moon bounce and concessions.

The season closed on October 22 at Glenpool, Oklahoma. It played in twelve states, traveling a total of 8,340 miles.

Robert Moyer's one ring Bentley Bros. Circus opened on February 1 in Miami, Florida. It played Gainesville, Florida on March 20. The staff included Bob "Cowboy" Moyer and Diane Moyer, owners; Rodney Kline, secretary-treasurer; Amy Kiltarczyk, office manager; Patricia Kline, superintendent of tickets; Andrea Yunt, national marketing director; Thomas Thorne and Steve Mason, regional marketing; Marleney DeNiro, concession manager; Alberto Posso, boss canvas man; Macho Hernandez, property boss; Raul Hoffmann, transportation superintendent.

The rolling stock included a pole and canvas semi; a sound and equipment semi and an animal semi. There were six nine-high bleacher seat trailers for general admission. The European-style big top was like the one used by Kelly-Miller. Reserved seating was on 200 folding chairs. There were two Bobcat tractors.

It had two elephants, two camels and a number of dogs. Cathy Hayes was ringmistress. Moyer presented four lions and two camels. Other acts included clown Gabby Castro; Nicoli and Anton,

hand balancing; Monica, juggling and Roman rings; Diane Moyer, dogs; Vitalli Buza, aerial strap act; Joel Faulk, western act; and a motorcycle globe act.

The coast-to-coast route took the show as far as San Francisco. The show closed on October 29 in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

The Vidbel Circus played a series of indoor dates on March in Kentucky and Ohio. It played the Ashland, Kentucky Shrine on March 25. Danny McCallum was ringmaster. Oleg Rudinitske provided music on keyboard with Wynn Murrah on drums. The acts included clowns Billy Vaughn and Mike Snyder; Armando Christiana, juggling and trampoline; Willimantic Vaugh, hula hoops; Constantine Sanou, aerial act; Jennifer Vidbel, liberty ponies; Ryzkovs, plate spinning; Anna Lee Ava, aerial act; Erik Adams, dogs; Santini Demon, swords and fire dance; Sandou, Russian bears; and Tom Demry, elephants.

The staff included Scott Vidbel, manager; Susan Vidbel, concessions; and Dan McCallum, ringmaster and announcer;

The tenting season opened on May 3 in Norwood, New Jersey, under a new red and white 80 by 120-foot big top seating 1146. On the midway were a concession-ticket trailer, a moon walk, and a face-painting booth. The performers included Captain Susan Vidbel, birds; Oleg Ryjkov, acrobat and spoon juggling; clown Mike Snider; O'Donnell's dog and goat act; Meirmanov's, perch pole; Rob Lange, juggler; Sadie Kaldaeva, house cat act; the Altier Archers, bow and arrow act; Jennifer Vidbel, miniature horses; Almas, hand balancing.

It played the Hamburg New York fair on August 10 to 20. John and Tina Winn, motorcycle act and sway poles; clown John Kane, and Gordon and Vickie Howle, foot juggling and Artistovs, juggling and rola bola were added for this engagement.

John and Catia Walker's Walker Bros. Circus indoor unit played Middletown, Ohio on January 17 using the Stars of the Circus title. Norma Cristaini did the booking by telephone from Florida. Kid tickets



The new big top on Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus in Maplewood, New Jersey in July. Paul Gutheil photo.

were distributed at local stores.

The acts included Damin & Co., unicycles; Miss Dallas Zoppe, hula hoops; Dallas Duo, aerial cradle; Anna Lee, balancing and contortion; Scott Taylor, birds, unrideable mule, snakes and the Roseaire-Zoppe chimps.

The tented season opened in New Richmond, Ohio on May 25. The big top, in its second season, was a yellow square end top with two center poles and four-quarter poles. There were two seat wagons and five sections of bleachers.

The midway consisted of a pony sweep, a concession-ticket semi and elephant rides. Scott Taylor was ringmaster. The acts included most of those that had been with the indoor unit. Tom Thompson handled the Cuneo elephants. The show played Newbury, Florida on October 17.

The Earl family's Roberts Bros. Circus opened March 8 in Fanning Springs, Florida. Sister Dorothy Fabritze, traveling with the show, offered a prayer before each performance. Sister Bernard Overkamp was also on the show, joining Sister Dorothy in the operation of the cook-

Roberts Bros. Circus in Warner, New Hampshire. Chuck Druding photo.



house. The two nuns were members of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

During the season CNN filmed the Sisters and played the tape a number of times. The rolling stock and canvas was the same as the prior year. The performance was basically the same as in 1999, with the exception of clown Jelly Bean being replaced by Brent DeWitt. The acts included Angela Kycia, aerialist; Steve Janzac, revolving ladder; the Petrova family, aerial perch, unicycle and risley; Bob Earl, liberty horses; Marcella Hanley, dog act; Ken Benson, elephant and pony; Chris Conners, illusions and musical act; Akan Davis, juggler;

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus opened in Queen Creek, Arizona. The show had a new marquee and cookhouse tent. Owner Red Johnson announced the performance. The show played Baraboo, Wisconsin on August 14.

The show was in Yucaipa, California on April 22. By then Billy Ray King was ringmaster. The acts included the Danny Kerry Duo, rola bola, juggling and chair balancing; clown Renzo Ticoliny; Patsy and Carlos Szwed, dogs, swords and ladder and mini space wheel; Travanna, single trap and aerial loop walking; Yoya, hula hoops; Cathy Puentes, foot juggling.

At the end of the season Tray Key bought the show from Red

Johnson.

After a year in the barn, Bob Childress took his Hendricks Bros. Circus on the road for a Southern tour. Prior to starting his circus he operated a carnival out of Easley, South Carolina.

Robert Snowden contracted the early part of the season as well as dates in Louisiana and Mississippi where Shrine-sponsored dates were booked.

The show played Valdese, North Carolina on May 21. The big top was an 80-foot blue and white round with a forty-foot and two 20-foot middles. Chair seating was offered on a center seat wagon. Other seat wagons provided general admission seating. The rolling stock included a spool truck



Walker Bros. ticket wagon in Middleton, Wisconsin in July. Tim Tegge photo.

with rest rooms and a stake driver. There were twenty pieces of rolling stock on the show.

The midway contained a concession-office trailer, a moon walk, a camel ride and a free petting zoo, under a 50 by 30 foot orange and white-striped tent. A pony ride was also in the tent. A young African elephant was added to the show.

Mel Ray Silverlake handled announcing and pitches and presented camel and llama, comedy whip act. The performers included Gaylord Maynard and Chief Bearpaw; Steven Howell, elephant; the Wu troupe, aerial acts, unicycle, tumbling and flying act; Carl and Patti Reed, dogs; Trey Black, juggler; clown Kenny Lindsey.

The staff included King Charles, 24 hour man; Jim Kernan, concession boss; Floyd Carter, electrician



The Culpepper and Merriweather elephants in Portage, Wisconsin in August. Tim Tegge photo.

and Bobcat operator; Albert Buchanan, cookhouse; and John Young, mechanic.

In the fall the show, using the title Hendricks Family Circus, played indoor dates, showing in Kingston, North Carolina among other cities. Mel Ray Silverlake was announcer and did plate spinning. The acts included Cosmo, clown high wire act; Asbesto, fire eating; Miss Unity, web act; and Steven Howell III, elephant, snake act, camel and llama act.

Gopher Davenport's Starr Bros. Circus had a strong season in Canada in 1999. With plans to return there in 2000 the show was stored at the Walford, Ontario fair grounds.

Starr opened in early April in Ontario. The staff and acts were flown to Toronto from Texas. The first ten days were played indoors due to cold weather. The tenting season started under an 80-foot big top with one 40 and two 20s. Although the show had a new blue and red 90 by 150 foot big top it was not used until the rain and mud season passed. The

The Hendricks Family Circus in Louisiana. Albert Bockman photo.



new tent sat about a thousand people. Two long bunkhouse sleepers were used by the Mexican workmen.

The eight, or so, trucks were one tonners pulling fifth wheel trailers.

A concession trailer, moon bounce, pony sweep, a tented petting zoo, and miniature cars were on the midway.

A kids ticket marketing program went over big. The charge for adults was \$14 in advance and \$16 at the door.

The ninety-minute performance included Mike Rice doing a dog and pony act, mule pick-out, and a comedy horse. All of the acts were from Brazil, except for Mrs. Rice and Mrs. Davenport. The performance had a girl balancing act, single web, bola; hula hoop, cloud swing; comedy horse act; dogs; and whip cracking. Walt Stimax clowning the performance. The show jumped from Cornwall, Ontario to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia for six to eight weeks.

By July Starr was back in Northwest Ontario. The Canadian business was very good. The show entered the United States to play stands in Maine. While in the United States the Circus Majestic title was used.

The Alain Zerbini Circus played its usual long season. The show opened in Georgia in January and played Alabama, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio and then headed to

New Jersey to play dates in the East. On June 6 in Portage, Wisconsin, the show was side walled due to a rain-soaked fair-

grounds. Zerbini played the Franklin Country Fair in Columbus, July 15-22.

Its red and white-striped big top was an 80 with one 50-foot middle. The steel bleachers seated about 1,000 people. The show moved on two very large semis pulled by Freightliner tractors. Animals on the show were two camels, four ponies, dogs, three hogs, two snakes and a flock of geese. Camel rides were given on the midway.

The Ramirez family presented the entire performance plus show owned animals presented by Zerbini and his wife. Acts included juggling, dog act, musical clowns, camel and four ponies, hand balancing, three hogs and geese, and space wheel. The music was taped.

One of the most unusual circuses on the road was Circus Hope, produced by Dr. James Lavender. It was a non-profit program of The Thank God for Kids Foundation of Richmond, Virginia. Circus Hope was secular and not a religious program.

The show opened April 4 in Blackstone, Virginia and closed on October 28 at Charlottesville, Virginia. It played in Virginia, North Carolina and West Virginia. Some dates were sponsored, and all dates used free kids tickets.

The show almost died and did come home for a while in the summer due to poor locations in West Virginia. Shopping malls and church sponsorships were the most successful dates.

The big top was a new blue and yellow 100 foot round top with one forty foot middle. It sat 1,600 people. Additionally, a 30 by 60-foot menagerie top was carried for hoof stock.

It moved on No. 75 semi, office, tickets and concessions; No. 85 semi, bunkhouse and floats; No. 15 semi, 45 foot beast wagon carrying lions and tigers; No. 95 a 45-foot semi carrying big top, forklift, generator, seats and a leopard cage. No. 25, a flat bed semi carrying seats; No. 65 semi sleeper; No. 55 semi carrying lions, tigers, bears and leopards; No. 45 semi, horse transporter and No. 75 with butchers.

Seating was on aluminum bleachers and metal folding chairs. A large



The Alain Zerbini Circus at the Franklin County Fair in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Pfening photo.

novelty stand was inside the entrance to the big top. Menagerie attractions not included in the performance were Schnappendragon, the Amazon Terror, 500-pound alligator and the Calcutta Crusher, a 240-pound python.

The features of the early season were clown Giovanni Zoppe; aerialist Rietta Wallenda; Patti Antalek Reed with a high school horse; Trey Black, dogs and juggling; Dan McKeon, birds; and Sando and Candy Ramos, trapeze, balancing and hula hoops. The animal displays included a zebra, camel, llama, Barbados ram, Siberian tiger, and African lion. The big cats and young grizzly bear were presented in a "Trainerless Cage." A show stopper was the "World's Largest Spiders."

Following the West Virginia fiasco the outfit regrouped and went back on the road for the second half of the season. Acts and animals from Bob Childress' Hendricks Bros. Circus were added. They included Tanya, the elephant, and camel, llama and goat acts. Mel Ray and Unity Silverlake and daughter Katana, Captain Stephen Howell III and Junior Horseley worked the Childress stock.

Also working the second half of the season was Rebecca Ostroff on single trapeze. She was formerly on Circus Borel. The clowns were Harry Moore and David Morgan.

Miriam Morgan was director of zoological affairs and worked most of the show-owned animals along with manager Barry Hatchett.

The music was on tape, operated

six semis. Freight lines were used to move it on long jumps and the show owned tractors made short moves.

Charles F. Smith, former treasurer of the Ringling show, provided guidance during the season. Unique among circuses, Circus Hope was committed to Peta. The understanding was that Peta would stop harassing Circus Hope in exchange for the animal rights group being allowed to place in sanctuaries any animals that Dr. Lavender considered under undo stress. During the year a lion, two wolves, a coyote and a bear were placed with Peta.

Tommi Liebel's Liebling Bros. Circus played Clinton, Iowa on July 30. The show was sporting a new blue, yellow and white European-style big top. The acts included clown Tommi Liebel, one man band and elephant; Miss Yulmaral, hula-hoops and high wire; Trey Reed, dogs and pony; a big and little horse act and juggling; Franceska Liebel, single trapeze and pony; Patti Reed, horse and kissing monkey.

An interesting touch was a visit to the menagerie after the performance; the charge was the cost of a bag of peanuts. A five-legged cow was part of the menagerie.

The show played the Crawford County Fair in Meadville,

by the announcer and performance director. This job was shifted between four different people including Dr. Lavender when he was on the show.

By the end of the season the truck fleet had been reduced to

Pennsylvania on August 19.

Weller Bros Circus, a small one-ring tent show, made a short tour of central Florida, playing buildings. It was in Winterhaven on April 8. It played Haines City the next day. Bryan Weller was ringmaster. It was in Enterprise, Alabama on June 28. The acts included clown Dennis Smith, juggling and comedy wire act; Mambo, gorilla; Bill Weller, wolves and straight jacket escape.

The Weller sideshow appeared at the Pinellas County Fair from March 29 to April 2. The kid show was housed in a 20 x 40 tent. The attractions included juggling, fire eating, a straight jacket escape, a pack of Arctic white wolves and some museum type displays.

The Reynolds Family Circus opened on April 16 in Mt. Carmel, Illinois. Seventy-eight year old Faye Reynolds' organ music backed the performance. Dan Reynolds was ringmaster. Patsy Reynolds was

A Circus Hope poster. James Lavender collection.





A new two wheeled trailer used by Tommi Liebel in 2000. Arnold Brito photo.

concession boss.

The two-hour show included clowns Maria Skinner and Bob Bone; Jens Larson, rola bola and chair balancing; Pat Davison, juggler and unicycle. The tour included 18 towns in Kentucky and Illinois.

Dave Twomey's Happytime Circus played a split season in Southern California. Most dates used a 50 by 76-foot round end push pole yellow big top seating 350 people. All dates were played for Roy Hassett as a free attraction at fairs. A 100 by 150-foot big top was used on the larger dates. Twomey's wife Judy died on July 4. They had been married forty-one years.

The acts included Twomey as Happy the clown; Ken Twomey, plate spinning; Jerrod Twomey, globe act; and Sir Francisco, one finger stand and hand balancing on high table.

Yankee Doodle Circus played Blackstone, Massachusetts on January 27. Owner Mike Naughton presented Jennifer Vidbel and Scott O'Donnell with their barnyard review; Almas Mimanov, hand balancing and perch pole; the Arestov, Russian doll routine and rope act; Bill and Bob, clowns; Kimberly Smith, aerial lyre.

The Star Family Circus, owned by Oscar Garcia, played a number of fairs. The show was again in the south in the fall. It was in Childressburg, Alabama on November 7.

The Russell Bros. Family Fun Circus played its big date at the California Mid-Winter fair in Imperial, California, March 3 to 12.

The show, owned by Ed Russell and Stephen Michaels, included Russell's bird act, magic and illusions; Michaels, hand balancing, juggling and plate spinning.

The Circus Zoppe played dates in Arkansas in June and Dallas on June 10. Sandra Zoppe produced

the show. Shane Johnson provided the Clyde Bros. Circus ring curb and mat. The acts included Adriana Poema, high school horse and single trapeze, and Irvin Hall, clown juggler and baboons.

Using the Zoppe Family Circus title, the show appeared as a free attraction at the Vermont State Fair in Rutland. The acts included Susan Sheryl, Afghan dogs; Davide Zoppe, monkeys; and Bruno Blaszk, tigers.

Burro Bill's Greater Combined Wild West Circus played Deming, New Mexico on May 13. Howdy Fowler and trick roper Darrell Hawkins produced the show. The performance included Princess Yahooskin, Indian sign language and Indian dancing; Joyas del Desiertoe, Mexican dancing; Raul Granillo, Mexican horsemanship and Texas long horn steer; H a w k s h a w Hawkins, trick roping; Burro Bill, whip cracking, shooting from horse back and ladder act.

The Pawnee Bill Wild West Show appeared at the Ft. Worth Pioneer Days in September. The Cartwright family of Ft. Worth produced the show. The program included a herd of buffalo, a long horn cattle drive, a whip act, trick roping, horse jumping through fire hoops, sharp shooting.

The Circus Fun

Review played Pleasanton, California on July 9.

The Canfield Family Circus played a full season. It was in Tucson, Arizona, May 20 and 21 and spent most of the tour in California. It was in San Francisco June 3 and 4 and Pleasanton, California, November 25 and 26.

Ned Goldberg's Cirque played Indo Springs, California on February 16 to 21.

Arthur Duchek again produced a thrill show during the Great Falls, New Jersey Festival in Patterson, New Jersey over Labor Day weekend. The show featured Bello Nock doing a bungee act over the Passaic River and a sway pole act on the ground.

Circus fans J. E. Bourgoys and J. G. Tyburski presented their Circus von Amberg in New Orleans, May 19 to 28. The performance included a juggler, acrobats, clowns, a flamenco dance, slack wire, fire eating, stilt dancing, bird act, and trapeze.

The major Shrine Circus producers continued their quest to expand their routes by signing temples away from each other. Some sold their show by guaranteeing a fixed amount of revenue from the elephant rides. Others promised a bigger performance.

The Tarzan Zerbini Circus, sometimes using the Circus Maximus and Royal Canadian Circus titles, opened early in February. Larry Solheim was general manager and bandleader. Michael Naughton, of the Yankee Doodle Circus, was ringmaster and the acts included the Flying Pages; Raul Alvarez, dogs; Anatoly, hoops; Chip Arthurs, elephants; Jill Pages, strap act; Martine Alvares, tumbling; Sacha Pavlata, cloud swing; Ted MacKay, wild animal act; Sandou family, Russian bar; and the Flying Wallendas, high wire. The show played the Denver

Shrine from March 31 to April 2. The acts included the Flying Lunas; the Fushins, motorcycle globe; Zerbini elephants; Ted McRay, wild animal act; Martin Alcaez, aerial strap act and the Wallenda high wire act.

Zerbini produced the Wilmington, Massachusetts Shrine, May 15 to 21. Joseph D. Bauer was ringmaster and announcer. The act included Santani Demon, fire eating and sword handling; Luis Munoz, cannon act; Brian Franzen, tiger act and elephants; Mureer brothers, clowns; Ian Garden, Welsh pony drill; Ms. Amy, cloud swing; Maya and Sampson Zerbini, dogs and juggling; John and Tina Winn, motorcycle on wire and aerial platform motorcycle; Nicolas Souren, juggling; Chim Gee, foot juggling; Kimberly Smith, single trapeze.

Hamid's Circus Royal, produced by George Hamid, Jr., provided the performance for the Murat Shrine in Indianapolis, March 2 to 5. Larry Rothbard was handleader and Peter Sturgis was ringmaster. The acts included Kay Rosaire, tigers; Miss Aurelia and Mr. Sasha, cloud swings; Pasquale's comedy car; Olate's dogs; Garcia Duo, aerial cradle; Steve Archer, juggler; Tino Wallenda, high wire; Flying Cortez, trapeze; Galambo Duo, unicycle, the Hartzells, archery act, the five Jacob-Barrada elephants and Rebecca Smith, cannon act.

In April the show played dates in

Hamid's Circus Royal in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Paul Gutheil photo.



Shannon (l) and Buckles Woodcock and their elephants at the Big E fair. Paul Gutheil photo.

Kingston, Pennsylvania; and Hays, Manhattan and Salina, Kansas. It played the Ft. Worth Shrine, November 8 to 18 and Mankato, New Mexico, November 15 to 19. In Fort Worth the acts included Bruno Blaszak, tigers; Don Otto, comedy diving act; Elaine Hall, juggling and bears; and the Flying Condors.

The George Carden Circus International produced the Shrine date in Minneapolis, October 19 to 22. The performance lasted less than two hours. Charles Vincent was ringmaster and did a magic act. Other acts included Marnie's tigers; the Flying Vargas; Lloyd's dogs; Elena, hula hoops; Toscanos and GiralDOS, high wire; Cyclones, motorcycle globe; Juan Rodriguez, liberty ponies; Svetlana Transfo, quick change act; Brett Carden, three elephants; Toscana, Jasmine Duo and the Vargas, cradle acts; and Brian Miser, cannon act.

The Jordan World Circus provided the program for the Cincinnati Shrine, March

9-12. The staff included Jody Jordan, producer; Delisa Jordan, marketing director; Scott Emerson, musical director; Billy Barton, performance director; Devin Chandler, ringmaster and announcer. The performance included Shane Johnson's tiger act; Acosta Trio, high wire; Justino Zoppe, juggler; Jordan Danger Zone Riders, motorcycle globe; Susan Sheryl, dogs; the Anthonys, space wheel; Rolling Diamonds, skating act; the Fossio family, balancing act; the Flying Pages; Davide Zoppe, monkeys; Estaphan Trio and Mariba Trio, aerial cradles; James

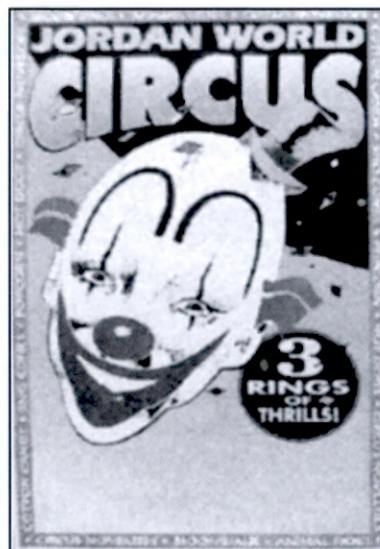
Zajicek with the four Jordan elephants.

Wayne McCary played his usual Shrine dates in the Northeast. His circus was in Concord, New Hampshire April 6 to 9. Charles Van Buskirk was ringmaster. Bob Carabia led a five-piece band. The acts included John Welde, bears; clown Barry Lubin, Alida Michele Wal-lenda, cloud swing;

Ruby Rowat, single trapeze; the Bill Morris elephants; the Flying Cortez; Dantella Goncalves, hula hoops; and Rebecca Smith, cannon act.

McCary's Eastern States Exposition, aka Big E, opened on September 15 and ran until October 1 in West Springfield, Massachusetts. The theme of the fair was Mardi Gras. Six floats appeared in the daily parade around the grounds. Other parade units were the Commerford eight-pony hitch pulling a calliope; the Budweiser Clydesdale team; and Dave Hale's eight-dromedary hitch.

Tommy Hanneford produced the Big E Super Circus, presented in





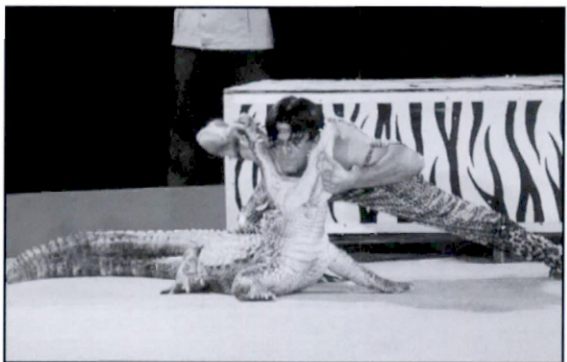
The Plunkett Circus played Omaha, Nebraska in August. Ron Sanford photo.

the Hanneford European-style big top. Heidi Herriott was announcer, Larry Stout led the band. John Wilson was ringmaster. The acts included Nellie Hanneford Poema with her 12 liberty horses and ponies; Elena Panova, single trapeze; Shane and Alecia Hansen, platform skating; clown Cesar; Roman Tomonov, strap act; and the Woodcock elephants.

Hanneford's Bedazzled magic show managed by Smiley Daly, was on the midway.

John McConnell's Circus Royal produced the Utica, New York, Shrine circus from October 5 to 8. Peter Sturgis had a pony ride, slide and moon bounce. Senor Rai was announcer and magic act and Larry Rothbard was bandleader. The acts included clowns Greg and Karen DeSanto; Bruno Blaszak, wild animal act; Aurelia Wallenda and Sasha Pavlata, cloud swings; Justino Zoppe, juggling; Gabriella and Louisa, sin-

The Royal Palace Circus. Ed Meals photo.



gle trapeze and Roman rings; Susan Sheryl, dog act; the Marinoffs, aerial cradle; Davide Zoppe, monkeys; Buckles Woodcock, elephants; and Wallendas, high wire.

George Hubler's International Circus opened the season in Kansas City on March 4. The show returned to Youngstown, Ohio, March 4 to 19. Heidi Herriott was ringmaster and Chuck Schlarbaum was musical director. The performance included Ada Smieja's tigers; Gary Sladek and Alexis Group, aerial cradle; Count Cortezo, comedy car; Olmedas family, horses; Sandou, gymnast; Jimmy Hall's bears; Deliah and Terry Wallenda, high wire; Denise Trio, unicycles; Jamalls, juggling; the Darnells, magic; Maritza, strap act; Jacob-Barreda elephants; and Cortez troupe, flying act.

Other dates were played in Pine Bluff, Arkansas; South Bend, Indiana; Holland, Michigan; Berea, Ohio; LaPorte, Indiana; Eaton, Ohio; Wheeling, West Virginia; Burton, Ohio; and Oklahoma City.

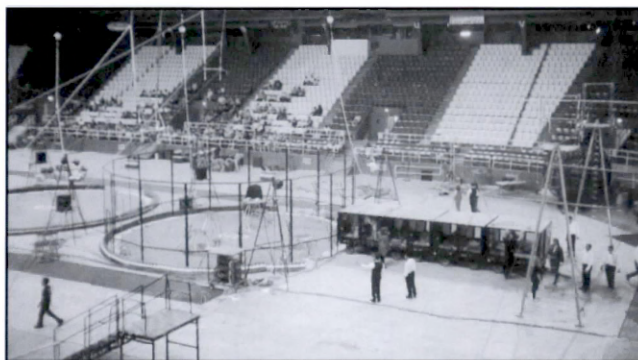
Circus Gatti played Mankato, Minnesota on July 22. Rico Dorago was ringmaster. The acts included Vincent von Duke, wild animal act; Mario and Robert, ladders; Miss Angela, pony drill; Mario, motorcycle globe; Miss Kimberly, single trapeze; Mariah sisters, rolling globes; and the Flying Angles; Samantha, hula hoops; Sedor, rola bola; Rodriguez brothers, space wheel; and John Pelton with three elephants.

Gatti played the Shrine shows in New Orleans and Shreveport, Louisiana in October.

Paul Kaye's Circus America played its regular date for the Evansville, Indiana, Shrine, November 23 to 26.

Clement Toca was musical director. The opening act was a long mount of fifteen Hawthorne elephants. The acts included John Campolongo, Hawthorn tigers; the Ruby Duo, trapeze; Kneisley, David Rosaire and Gokden's dog acts; the Espana Duo and Winn Duo, motorcycles on high inclined wire; Raiana, foot juggling; Dielkas Sisters, globes; Louise, foot juggling; Gaylord Maynard, comedy horse; Keith and Company, plate spinning; Derrick Rosaire, bears; Zoppe-Rosaire, chimps; Hall's bears; The Winns, motorcycle on platform; the Flying Rixardos, swinging trapeze; the Carrillos, high wire; the Kenya Wizards, tumbling and pyramid building; The Sky Masters, sway poles; and the Jordans, motorcycle globe.

James Plunkett produced the El Karuba Shrine Circus in Shreveport, Louisiana, May 5 to 7. The performance was given in the Plunkett Bros. Circus 120 foot big top with three 40-



Circus Gatti in Shreveport, Louisiana in October. Hank Fraser photo.

foot middles. Bleacher seating sat 2,400. Folding chairs were added for most shows. Christine Herriott Plunkett was ringmistress and presented a pony act. Other acts included Doug Terranova, tigers and elephants; Daniel DaCosta, strap act and hand balancing; Cousin Grumpy, pig act; Jasmine Duo, aerial cradle; Jack Cook, comedy car; Geraldo Family, high wire, juggling and globe act.

Plunkett also presented the Shrine show in Monroe, Louisiana, April 7 to 9, using most of the same performers. The closing date was the League City, Texas, Shrine, played under a big top, October 27 to 29. The tent, a

120 with three 50s, was formerly owned by Gopher Davenport. Interestingly, the back entrance had the James Christy Cole Circus logo. At this date the acts included Brian Franzen, wild animal act and three elephants; clown Cosmo; Star Plunkett, swinging ladder; James Hall, bears; Cyclones, motorcycle globe.

The Serge Coronas Circus played its regular date for the Shrine in Marietta, Georgia from May 5 to 14, for the first time in years it was not in a tent. It was presented in the Pavilion at the Jim R. Miller Park. On the midway were a pony ride, camel ride, a petting zoo with a giraffe, two zebras, llama and a goat.

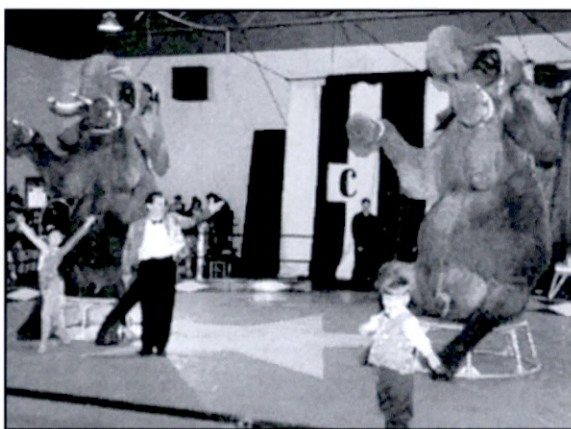
The acts included the Winn family, motorcycle on high wire, space wheel, motorcycle globe and sway poles; the Flying Lunas; a pony drill; and Capt. Lewis, cannon act.

Frank Curry again produced his circus in Nashville, Tennessee, February 3 to 6. A Hawthorn elephant act appeared in the performance.

Valentine's Mighty American Circus played Killeen, Texas on June 20 showing in the Rodeo Arena out doors. The acts included Geraldo, space wheel; Miss Britany, hula hoops; Miss Amanda, miniature horses; Miss Margaret, dogs; Miss Lynn, single trapeze; a single elephant; Lotto Sisters, cradle act; Henry and Enrico, juggling; Miss Giavava, low wire; and Chief Red Feather, dressage horse. The show played Humble, Texas on September 16. The performance there included a pony drill, space wheel, llama act, single trapeze, low wire and juggling. Mike Swain with an African elephant and the Flying Salazars completed the performance.

Canada's Garden Bros. Circus opened the season in the Toronto Skydome in February. Ian Garden, Jr., who also

was ringmaster, produced the show. He opened the performance on horseback. The acts included Leo Garcia, space wheel and motorcycle globe; John Campolongo, tigers; Flying Caceres, swinging trapeze; Al Calienes, clown bull fight; Walter and Victoria Murcia, high wire; the Torosyants, Russian trampoline; Tito Montoya, single trapeze; and Luis Demoral, single elephant. Scott Senna was bandleader. It closed the season in Brampton, Ontario, September 1 to 3.



The Circus Pages elephants. Tim Tegge photo.

A circus meant going to the local high school gym or fair grounds in many small towns. The producers of these shows had no big top, but often carried bleacher seats. Most had only a few trucks; others had as many as seven or eight. Most of these operations played long seasons; winter, spring and fall provided the best business. Nearly all of them used free kid's tickets.

Stephanie Monseu and Keith Nelson of the Bindlestiff Family Circus. Fred Pfening photo.



Ray MacMahon's Great European Circus, aka Royal American, played Cincinnati on January 27. Phil Chandler was ringmaster and the acts included Ed and Joyce Sherman, clowns; Bela

Taback, birds and miniature horse; Miss Tavanna, aerial act; Danny Carry, hand balancing; the Dancing Gauchos; Carey Brown Duo, rola bola; Miss Manuela, big and little horses; Picalos family, foot juggling. Late in the season the show played York, Pennsylvania on October 4.

The Great Sarasota Circus, operated by Harry Dubsky, Jr., played Cincinnati on March 3. The complete show was loaded in a giant semi-trailer. Brad Perkl was ringmaster and the acts included Matias Poema, rola bola; clown Irv Hall; Bannister family, dogs and plate spinning; Rocky the kangaroo; Dr. Yanos and Company, musical act; Poema family, trampoline.

The Royal Palace Circus, operated by Janos "John" Dubsky, played Baltimore in March. By June 1 it was in New Hampshire. Newcomer John Walker was ringmaster and announcer. The acts included the Galambos family, balancing and revolving perch; Nunez family, hand juggling; clown Alex Gomez; Mary Ruth Herriott, dog and pony review and Royal Lippizone horses; Alex Gomez, snake and alligator review; Yo Ya, hula hoops; Anal Hunez, single trapeze.

Billy Martin's Cole All Star Circus opened in January and played in New York and Pennsylvania. Paul Parsons was manager. John Kane was ringmaster and announcer. The acts included Arestov family, jump rope acrobatics; Brett Marshall, bicycle leaps; Jason Bautista, hand balancing; Simon Arestov, rola bola; Princess Kim Sue, web; Vlastic Bertini, snakes and trampoline; Mongo Bongo, gorilla parody; Gisela, contortion; Suan Vidbel, cloud swing. Owner Martin was away playing Hanneford dates.

Circus Pages, owned and operated by Jorge and Frieda Pages, opened in Arcadia, Florida on January 17. The wild animal show played fairgrounds and Armories. It traveled on seven or eight show-owned trucks.

It played Richmond, Indiana on April 1. James Earhart was ringmaster, and presented a dog act and BMX bike act. Other acts included Jorge Pages, lions and tigers; clown Tico Tice; Colleen Pages, web; Vincenta

Pages, pony drill and aerial lyre; Earhart Duo, bicycle act; Frieda Pages, camel and pony act; Yolanda, Appaloosa stallion; Posso Duo, low wire; and five Pages elephants.

The Famous Cole Circus played a series of dates in northern Ohio in May. It opened in Ashland, Ohio on May 4. The show used an elaborate backdrop. Sheila Morales was road manager. The performance included Princess Arias, aerial lyre; Estavan, magic act; clown Nachi; Enriques, camel act; Don Giovanni, plate spinning and juggling; Valencia, ponies and miniature horses; Miss Margaret's dog act; Phantasia, sword balancing; Desperados, aerial perch.

Professor Tegge's One-Ring Circus, presented by Tim and GiGi Tegge, appeared at Storybook Gardens, Wisconsin Dells from mid-May to the end of September. Two half-hour shows were given daily. The side walled performance included rope spinning, plate spinning, illusions and clowning.

The Variety Showcase Circus, produced by Ron Harris, played dates in New Hampshire in late November. Among the performers were clown John Kane, Simon Aristov, rola-bola and Bret Marshall, BMX bike act.

The Actors Gymnasium's Flying Griffin Circus of Evanston, Illinois debuted from February 19 to June 25 in Evanston. The acts included Tony and Lijanna Hernandez, high wire; and clowns Chuck Stubbings and Paul Katinal. It appeared again in Evanston from October 20 to November 26.

Floyd Bradbury's Magic Circus played a nineteen-week tour. The acts included the Dunderdales, rola bola; clown Alex Kartukov, juggling; Brent Webb, illusion and goats; Scott Dundee, unicycle; Olena, hula hoops; Byron Bowman, miniature horse; and Brad Bradbury, vent act.

In mid-season, using the American All Star Circus title, Bradbury and Brent Webb made major changes, bringing in a new contracting agent and advance crew. That was when the title was changed. A new ring curb and several sections of bleachers were added. The acts remained the same under both titles. The sea-



The New York Goofs played the New York City World Financial Center All-Clown Circus in September. Paul Gutheil photo.

son closed in Keokuk, Iowa on October 10.

Chuck Clancy and Tommy Bentley's Mark Charles Holiday Review played nine dates in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania from November 25 to December 23. The acts included Carmen Hall, chimps; Gena Shvartsman, juggling; Miss Victoria, contortion and hula hoops; Eugene Shvartsman, plate spinning; the Dancing Gauchos; John and Morgan Bundy, marionettes; and the Darnells, disappearing dogs. Tommy Bentley handled the concessions.

Circus Boreal, owned by James Clement, advertised itself as Alaska's only locally owned circus. It opened a seven-week run on June 9 in Anchorage.

George and Vicky Hanneford's Hanneford Family Circus continued at the Ft. Lauderdale Swap Shop. The hour-long performance was presented in the flea market building. The high-class show used special lighting effects, fog, and dancing waters. Four show girls did production numbers, web and illusions. The acts included three elephants; Tito Cristiani, trampoline; Vitali Buza, strap act and Raul Castanyo, clown.

The Bindlestiff Family Circus opened its fifth winter cabaret season with performances in the Loft Theater in Brooklyn from January 13 to 15. Keith Nelson and Stephanie Monseu were again the mainstays of the show. The performance varied, with adult shows presented around midnight. The program included Philomena, (Monseu) ringmistress and fire eating; Mr. Pennygaff (Nelson), clown and sword swallower; Scotty, the Blue Bunny, half man, half wild animal; Rocket Johnny,

dare devil clown; Tanya Gagne, strip-tease on a trapeze; Una Mimnagh, aerial lyre, corde lisse and single trapeze; Myla Goldberg, bearded lady; Anna Jack, hula hoops; Jeremy Shawl, magician; Sarah Johnson and Tanya Stebens, double trapeze. It

played Baltimore, Maryland in late April where a film company made a documentary on the show. Bindlestiff played Columbus, Ohio twice during the year. All equipment was packed in a two-wheeled trailer.

The nation-wide tour closed on October 3. The show traveled 23,940 miles and played fifty-nine cities.

Dwight Damon's Star Spangled Circus played its usual stand at the Deerfield Fair in New Hampshire. Performing under the sky, the show had these acts: Pat Davison, unicycle and juggling; Adelle's dog act; Dumitries, chair balancing; Patricks, rola bola; Hand Reno, foot-juggling; Dieter Galambos, low wire; and the Nocks, sway pole.

Super Cirque, produced by Marc Verreault, played Montreal and Ottawa in December. Pierre Jean was ringmaster. The performance included the Redpaths, web and flying trapeze; Winns, high wire motorcycle, motorcycle globe, sway pole; Hawthorn tigers presented by John Campolongo; Mafalda Zanperla, riding act; Ghysllain Gagne, miniature car; Hartzells, cross bow act; Jimmy Hall's bears; Don Otto, comedy diving; Gary Thomas, Hawthorn elephants; and Brian Miser, cannon, plus a second cannon.

Dorian Blake's Circus Sahara closed its indoor spring tour in Louisiana in June. Sampson was ringmaster. The acts were Marie France, dogs; Armando and Lili Cristiani, trampoline and Dorian and Janice Blake, birds and illusions.

Kline's Attractions presented its Circus Continental at the Scioto County Fair in Lucasville, Ohio on August 10. Tony Puska led a large band and Rick Legg was ringmaster. The acts included Brian Franzen, tigers and elephants; Alecia Michelle, cloud swing and slide for life; Bobby Steele, bears; clown Don Bridwell; Shane Hansen, juggler; Miss Cina,



The Circus Smirkus big top in Newport, New Hampshire in August. Chuck Druding photo.

space wheel; Rolling Diamonds, skating act; Aerial Lemoins, aerial motor-cycle.

The show also played the Lucas County Fair in Lucasville, Ohio on August 10 and the Berrian County Youth Fair in Berrian Springs, Michigan August 15,

Cathy Rogers Hetzer's Marvelous Mystics on Parade, played Cincinnati, Ohio on June 13. Happy Davis was manager and James Charter was announcer. The acts included clown Victor Phillips; Downtown Davis, bike act; Bob Whitcomb, juggler; Lori and James, human pin cushions; Happy Davis, trampoline; and Cartiers, large card act.

Using the title Santa's Christmas Show, the Hetzer organization returned to Cincinnati on December 21. Most of the acts had been in the June performance.

Jorge and Luann Barreda produced a circus as the Mississippi State Fair.

The All-Clown Circus was pre-

The Circus Flora big top in Tempe, Arizona. Joe Rettinger photo.



sented on September 23 and 24 in New York City's World Financial Center Winter Garden. The featured funny folks were Barry Lubin, Dick Monday, Bello Nock, Johnny Peers, and Tiffany Riley.

The Nock Family Circus played a four-day engagement at the Mall of Louisiana in Baton Rouge in September. The acts included T. J. Howell and Bello Nock.

Following in the footsteps of Cirque du Soleil a number of producers presented junior editions of the new wave circus. Most were no-animal shows. Most played in theaters and small auditoriums. A few owned their own trucks.

Jim Judkins' Circus Chimera opened on January 7 in Hilo, Hawaii. The six week tour took the show to the islands of Hawaii, Kauai, Maui, Molokai and Oahu. The final stand was in Kahuku, Oahu on February 20. Mike Gorman handled the booking and promotions in Hawaii and Martin Romo handled the big top and seats.

The performers were the Chimal and Rosales families, Guennadi Tregoub, Xia Hong Wu and Mumu. Their acts included tetterboard, juggling, aerial straps, and perch pole among others. There was no flying act in Hawaii.

The show was packed in containers and shipped to Oakland where the equipment was transferred to show trucks. Addition equipment not taken to Hawaii was picked up on March 2. This equipment had been stored in Donna, Texas for the winter.

The regular tenting season opened in Raymondsville, Texas on March 5. Texas was

played through March 31. A new big top was received in Del Rio, Texas on March 20. It was a European four pole white tent, with a blue interior. A large neon sign above the tent read "Circus Here Today."

By April 24 it was in Chauvin, Louisiana. New Orleans was played from April 29 to May 2. Moving quickly through Mississippi, a tour of Tennessee began on May 10. Two stands were played in Kentucky. Marion, Illinois was shown on May 22 and 23.

After three days of travel Chimera entered Canada and played Winkler, New Brunswick. Making long jumps it was in Wainwright, Alberta on June 9. The show was in Dawson Creek, British Columbia on June 23 and 24. The tour of that Provenance lasted until August 12 in Victoria.



Chimera returned to the United States in Oak Harbor, Washington on August 14. One stand was played in Lebanon, Oregon before going into California at Clearlake. The California tour lasted until November 3.

The season closed on November 17 to 19 in Cedar Park, Texas and returned to winter quarters in Hugo, Oklahoma. During the season the

Chimera traveled a total of 12,545 miles.

Circus Smirkus opened its 14th season on July 5 at Greensboro, Vermont. It completed its tour on August 20 in Barton, Vermont. Ticket buyers received a 16-page newspaper with information about the show.

The theme was "The Voyage of the Private Queen," a collaboration with Chicago's Midnight Circus. Davis McWilliams was the new executive director. Rob Mermin was artistic director. Ozzie Henchel was general manager. Erin Hennessey had the cookhouse. Giovanni Zoppe was clown and canvas boss. The performance included perch, cloud swing, hand balancing, web, bungee, low

wire, cradle, juggling, and contortion.

Some of the performers were adults, but most were youngsters eleven to sixteen years of age who presented cloud swing, juggling, clowning, and acrobatics, contortion, diablo, tight wire, hand balancing and single trapeze. It played 18 weeks in three states.

Circus Smirkus and Circus Smirkus Camp were separate entities. The traveling show selected performers from auditions. Some students from the camp had been with the traveling show, but only after auditions. The Circus Smirkus School, directed by David McWilliams, received a three-year grant of \$24,000 from the Windham Foundation, the Turrwll Fund and the Vermont Arts Council. The money was to be used for the development of year-round training of circus and related performance arts at the elementary and high school levels.

Circus Flora played its hometown of St. Louis, Missouri from May 5 to 21. In June David Balding said the show was negotiating addition dates in Houston, Texas and Scottsdale, Arizona. Due to financial problems in 1998 the circus did not tour in 1999.

In St. Louis Balding was ringmaster and Janine Del'arte led a five-piece band. The performers included Alexander Sacha Pavlata (also tent master) and Aurclia Wallenda, cradle act; Murial Reynolds, single traps; the Wallendas, high wire; the St. Louis Arches, acrobats; the Ashton Family, risley act; clown Kenny Raskin; Johnny Peers, dog act; and Igor Kassaev, Cossack riders.

The final stand of the season was in Tempe, Arizona, December 26 to January 7, 2001.

The New Pickle Circus and the San Francisco School of Circus Arts reunited for a production in San Francisco from December 20 to January 1. The production was titled Tetrasomia, Circus of the Elements. Lu Yi, master trainer, was the star of the performance. Diane Wasnak, clown and mime, was also featured. Other performers were Xiao Hong Weng, acrobat; Aidan O'Shea and Aimee Hancock, tumblers; Alexis Green, contortionist; Chris Weiland and Leo Sblendorio,

strap acts; Matt White, hand balancing; Ottavio, German wheel; and clown Diminutive Pickle. Composer and producer Holmes D. Ives performed original music.

The holiday performances were made possible through funding from the San Francisco's Grants for the Arts program.

Cirque Eloize's new show was titled Excentricus. Showing in theaters, the Montreal-based outfit opened in New York City on January 25. The acts included Marie-Eve Dunas, single trapeze; clown Jamie



Circus Equinox in Toronto in February. Tim Tegge photo.

Adkins, juggler and comedy slack wire; Arian Darche and Antoine Gagnon, aerial cradle; Sylvain Dubois, comedy bike routine; Marcus, web; Daniel Cyr, balancing act.

The route took the performance to Billings, Montana; Atlanta; Key West; Dallas; Eugene, Oregon; Arcada, California; Bellingham, Washington; Burlington, Vermont; Birmingham, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; Greenville and Purchase, New York; New London, Connecticut and Englewood, New Jersey, where it closed on May 13.

The non-animal circus later played the Hawaii Theater in Honolulu, October 25 to 29.

Cirque Equinox, produced by Michelangelo and Carolina Nock, played Toronto's Winterfest which was set up on Lastman Square on February 12 and 13 in the snow. The tent was heated. It appeared in a small rented two-pole big top seating 400. The six person performance included Carolina Nock, contortion; clown Timothy Tegge, plate spinning and sword illusion; Michelangelo Nock, strap act and chair tower;

Rietta Wallenda and Clinton Randall, web and aerial bars.

Equinox also played a few spot dates in the spring and fall. The Nocks were featured at the Tommy Bartlett Water Show in the Wisconsin Dells during the summer season.

Cirque Batard played San Francisco from October 29 to November 19 at the Forum at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Keith Hennessy produced the show; it was directed by Cahin Caha Gulko, a friend of Hennessy's and a former Soleil performer. The company included three European circus artists and three former members of a San Francisco dance troupe. The themed performance included Linet Andrea, a singing trapeze performer; Jess Curtis, pole routine and Gulko, rope magic.

Circus Sarasota played a summer stand in Sarasota July 5 to 30. The production, titled Dan Rice and the American Circus, was presented at the Theater Works.

In August it offered the city of Venice, Florida \$1,000 a month for the use of the Venice arena, formerly used by Ringling-Barnum. Although the building had been transferred from the U.S. Government to the city of Venice in 1947 it could not be leased or sold without FAA consent.

The 2001 show, produced by Pedro Reis and Dolly Jacobs, opened on the Sarasota County fair grounds on December 26. The acts included clown Barry Lubin; Casey Boomer, one armed juggler; Johnny Peers, dogs; Mark David, single trapeze; the Svensons, horses; David Dimitri, wire act; Yuri Risked, strap act; the Dancing Gauchos; Duo Design, plate spinning; and Trilogy, statue act.

Ward Alexander's Adult Circus Theodora played Reno and Seattle.

The Showfolks of Sarasota annual circus appeared in Sarasota on December 10, produced by John Walker, Jr. Charles Schlaubbaum was musical director and Scott Taylor was ringmaster. The performance included Mary Ruth Herriott's Tally-Ho goat and dog act; clown Co Co Kramer; Steve Jenzac, juggling and fire act; Michael, Kristina and Erima, hoop juggling and contortion, and hand balancing; Susan Vidbel,



Circus Vazquez in Chicago in September. Tim Tegge photo.

cloud swing; Benny Fornasari, dog act; Linda Herrmann, Lipizzan Stallions; Jeremy Hernandez, juggling; Jim and Peggy Trukza, house cats; Damian and Anna Galarreta, cradle act; Jack Cook, funny car; and Buckles and Barbara Woodcock's elephants. This was Barbara Woodcock's first appearance in the ring in years.

The New Shanghai Circus played the Hawaii Theater in Honolulu, March 3 to 5.

Australia's Circus Oz began a stand at the New Victory Theater in New York City on December 1.

The 2000 season saw a proliferation of traditional Mexican circuses playing Hispanic sections of cities in California. The number of Spanish-speaking outfits was far greater than in past seasons. At one time there were three of the shows in the Los Angeles area. Nearly all of the outfits used European-style big tops with an entrance reception tent in place of a marquee.

Circus Vazquez, traveling on six or seven trucks, played the Los Angeles Sports Arena January 8 and 9. The following week it played five days in Pomona. Bobby Moore's dogs were added for this stand. The circus showed exclusively in Latino communities. It had a blue and yellow big

Circo Garcia in Lincoln, Nebraska. Ron Sanford photo.



top and several new vehicles. During the season the stands were from one to four weeks.

On the program were Vincent Von Duke, cat act; Espanas, motorcycle wire acts; the

Winns, motorcycle wire act; the Los Fernandez Duo, space wheel; clowns Jesus Vasquez and Lucchio Navarro; Paul Dresdner, bicycle and balancing act; John Pelton with the Circus Gatti pony drill; Winns, sway pole and motorcycle globe; the Espanas flying act and the Circus Gatti elephants.

The circus played Denver and then made a long jump to Chicago in November. In December the show was on home ground in Mexico City for the holiday season.

Circo De Las Estrella played East Los Angeles on June 10. The entrance, through a truck, led into a large reception tent and then into the red, white and blue big top. A large banner sign was above the big top.

Circo De La Chilindrina played in downtown Los Angeles the first week of June.

Circus Dolarea presented the Festival Latino-Americano in 2000, playing Nevada and California.

Circo Garcia showed Houston, June 11 to 18, playing mainly to Hispanic circus goers. The Jamie Garcia family presented their show on a four-foot high stage-ring in a blue big top. It traveled on three semis and seven truck trailers. A light plant was mounted on one trailer; a stake driver on another. A big semi served as a front door. There were no animals on the show.

The performance included Bardo Garcia, space wheel;

Metott, hand balancing; Sir Vitalec, musical clown; Kerne, magic; Leorna, web; Vitalies, archery act; Bardolino, comedy trampoline; Linda and Leorna Garcia, high wire; and the Garcia's motorcycle globe act.

Garcia played a number of fairs in Iowa, Kansas, and Tennessee as well as the Nebraska State Fair. It played the Hawaii State Fair, July 23 to August 6.

The Caballero's El Circo Del Millonrio played Lynwood, California. It featured a female Mexican movie star. The show had a misunderstanding with a marketing firm's disputed bill. The marketing company went to court and took control of the show's equipment.

The Osario family's American Crown Circus and Circo Osario toured the west again in 2000.

Miguel Caceres opened his Circus International in November in Oklahoma. It played Dallas for a ten-day stand in December.



Circo De Las Estrella in Los Angeles in June. Jerry Cash photo.

The European-style yellow, blue and red big top was 149 by 199 feet.

The seating on five high wood and metal bleachers that had a capacity of 500 people. The complete show moved one 24-foot straight bed truck.

Miguel Caceres, ringmaster, announced the show in Spanish. The program included Crisia Caceres, single trapeze; Abadilla brothers, clowns; Carlos Guiterrez, rola bola; Dider Giraldo, juggling; Talina Abadilla, hair hang; Lozanos, comedy musical act; Giraldo family, high wire; Ricardo Layano, bounding rope; Alexia Abadilla, web; Dresdner's Gaucho act; Les Cyclones, motorcycle globe.

Circo Italiano, another ethnic show, opened in Las Vegas in June.

The 2000 season saw a resurgence of the traditional American circus



The Hall & Christ side show at the Meadowlands Fair. Paul Gutheil photo.

side show.

Business was generally good for Chris Christ's and Ward Hall's World Attractions in its 23rd year. The format of their show was returned to a more traditional style with live attractions. The show was transported in two semi-trailers and two straight trucks with trailers and a motor home. Jimmy Long was boss canvas man.

The live acts included Pete Terhune, dwarf performer; Bruce Snowdeb, fat man; Ginger Snap, snake handler and walking on glass; Jack Donohue, block head; Molotx, sword swallower and knife thrower; Cha Perez, electric chair; D. L. Apcolypse, bed of nails; Fred Lylling, fire eating; and Frank Stine, human pincushion.

The route included fairs in Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, West Virginia, closing at the Pensacola, Florida Interstate fair on October 29.

It was a dream come true for Ken

Ken Harck in the ticket box of Brothers Grim side show in Milwaukee. Fred Pfening photo.



Harck and John Hartley when their Brothers Grim side show debuted in Milwaukee on the grounds of the Great Circus Parade in July. A 100 x 40 foot blue and white-striped tent was fronted

by a new 100-foot double-deck banner line painted by Hartley. All of the attractions on the inside were depicted on the banner line.

Two high-ticket boxes and a bally platform fronted the large double entrance banner. An air calliope provided music for the openings, made by Harck and a couple of guest talkers. Nine large flags of different nations, with the American flag in the center, flew from the top of the banner line. Large shaded lights were mounted on the banner line poles. The flash at night was outstanding. A large loud speaker was mounted on the top of the entrance banner.

The live attractions were on six-foot high-skirted stages, a la Hagenbeck-Wallace. The center poles of the tent were decorated with flags, colorful drapes and a string of lights. Taped music was played during the presentations of the large number of live attractions. Tim Cridland was inside lecturer.

The attractions included: Mighty Jack, John Hartley, strong man, who among other tricks tore up a thick telephone book; Engima and Katzen, tattooed couple; Torture King, Tim Cridland, had a concrete block broken on his chest while laying on a bed of nails and ate fire; Melinda Maxie, bearded lady; Fanny Bryson, fat lady; Natisha, Oriental dancer and sword swallower; Danyelle De-

Meux, whip act and Spydora illusion; Punch and Judy act; electric chair illusion and Jay Marshall, magician and blade box. A number of museum-type displays and a merry-go-round organ completed the layout in the tent.

Crystal Wine was front door superintendent; Ryan Mobee was sound and light superintendent and Eric McConnell was in charge of concessions. Post card photos of the attractions were sold along with a variety of novelties.

The complete layout was a recreation of the old-time railroad circus side show. A crew from the television's Learning Channel was there filming a documentary on sideshows. John Pugh owner of the Beatty-Cole Circus and former circus owner



The Reynolds side show at Coney Island. Joseph Meyers photo.

Ricky Wallenda were visitors to the show.

Business built during the six-day stand with a number of packed houses on the final day. Harck and Hartley received a number of offers for additional stands, including the Missouri State Fair and the 2001 Detroit Shrine date to be produced by John McConnell.

Veteran West Coast showman Bobby Reynolds came east to present his side show at New York City's Coney Island from Easter to Labor Day. A full banner line was used. The title on the entrance banner read, "International Circus Sideshow and Museum Gallery." The show was presented in a yellow and red tent. The exhibit was mainly wax museum type displays of famous freaks. Admission was \$1.00. Reynolds left Coney Island early to join the Strates Carnival in Hamburg, New York.

In the fall Reynolds had a show at

the St. Louis City Museum for a seventeen-day stand. He gave it the title of "Bobby Reynolds Believe It You're Nuts Hysterical Museum."

The attractions included Chupacabra, the electric chair woman; Marcy Reynolds, foot maiden; Matt Hely, bed of nails, walking on glass and light bulb eating; Eddie Sudan, human blockhead; Barnum's "original" Fiji Mermaid; and shrunken human heads. During the engagement Reynolds announced that after fifty years in the business he would retire.

Dick Zigun's Sideshow by the Seashore was again located on the Coney Island boardwalk in a building on the corner of Surf Avenue and West 12th Street. Seats were provided for 99 people with a bar serving beer. The show has been in the location for a number of years. Attractions included Frank Hartman, fire-eater; Koko, the killer clown; Stephanie Torres, Serpentina; Fak, tattooed man; Tyler Fleet and Dick D. Zigun. Admission was \$2.

The Vamphear Circus appeared at the American Film Market convention at Loew's Hotel in Santa Monica, February 23 to March 1. The acts included the Troma beauties; and Shelly Michelle, star of the film *Nuke 'em High*. The show played the Dragonvale Fantasy-Renaissance Fair in Northridge, California, on May 20 and 21. The performance there included the Serpent Sorceress, dance and illusions; David Markham, sword swallowing and whips; Duvalie, bed of nails and

Kay Rosaire in the Clementon, New Jersey amusement park. Paul Gutheil photo.



blade ladder; Madam Ming, contortionist; and Ted Shred, fire eating and straight jacket escape.

The Blue Monkey Side Show played the Indiana State Fair from August 10 to 20. It was housed in a 30 by 50 foot tent and was fronted by a 60-foot banner line. The attractions included Jeeribaldi, blockhead, rubber man and pincushion; the Professor, sword swallower, fire eating and human ostrich; Aratina, glass walker, whips and sword ladder walker; Shanky, talker, bed of nails, knife thrower and Jordano, lizard boy. Also inside the tent were pickled punks, a stuffed lizard, and an old skull. A blow off was given in a curtailed off area that had a performance platform with a headless child. The ding was \$1. On November 4 some of the acts played a convention in Indianapolis. Some of the acts were from the Modern Gypsies Circus sideshow from Birmingham, Alabama.

John Cuneo's Hawthorn Corporation was the biggest wild animal act purveyor in the country. A four elephant act, presented by Gary Thomas, spent most of the season with the Jordan World Circus. The act was also with the Hamid Circus Royal in Houma, Louisiana and Paul Kaye in Evansville, Indiana. Another four elephant act, presented by John Caudill III, was with Circo Mundial in February and May, and was with Walker Bros. Circus from June to October. It also worked the Paul Kaye date in Evansville and with Hamid in Fort Worth. Another elephant act, presented by Tom Thompson, was with Tarzan Zerbini from February 3 to March 12. The act was with Walker Bros. in May. Other dates were played for Hamid. The act was with Ray Valentine in Arkansas from October 6 to 14. Another four elephant act, presented by James Zajick, was with Jordan in January, February, April and May. This act was with Circo Mundial from May 31 to November 5. It was with Hamid in Fort Worth November 9 to 18. It also played the Paul Kaye date in Evansville, Indiana.

Hawthorn also had five tiger

acts. A fifteen white tiger group was in China at Guangzhou, where a special 6700 seat theater was built for the act. On the Chinese New Year 47,000 people came to see the white tigers.

Another fifteen white tiger act was in Thailand. Susan Lacey on the Beatty-Cole Circus presented a third act. Hawthorn also had two smaller tiger acts with six standard and one gold tiger. One act, presented by Marine Dock, was with the George Carden Circus. The other small act, presented by John Campologo, was with Garden Bros. Circus in Canada.

A number of small circus-related animal shows appeared at fairs. They included Don and Carole Womack's Alfie Cockatoo Show; Bobby Besmehn, juggling show; the Rix family Big Bear Ranch show; Lee



Khris Allen with some Marcan tigers at the Meadowlands Fair in June and July. Paul Gutheil photo.

Stevens' Baboon Lagoon; and Khris Allen with the Josip Marcan tigers.

The three George Carden Circus elephants played fairs in mid-summer presenting an "Elephant Entercounter." It was really an elephant ride. Kay Rosaire again spent the summer at an amusement park in Clementon, New Jersey.

The Outdoor Amusement Business Association held its second annual circus conference in Sarasota, Florida, December 8 to 13. Heidi Herriott-Koch, the OABA circus representative, organized it. The meeting followed the Circus Producers Association meeting held on December 8. The OABA program included sessions on media training, technology, and animal issues.

The Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wisconsin opened its 42nd season on May 6. The big top per-

formance included the Marinoffs, aerial duo; clowns Greg and Karen DeSanto; the Jacob-Barreda elephants; Rosaire family, dog act; and Sascha Gasser, slack wire and rola bola. David SaLoutos was ringmaster and Larry Stout led a three-piece band.

A new attraction was the Razzle Dazzle Review, produced by SaLoutos. The show featured several acts by juggler and unicyclist T. J. Howell and the DeSanto clowns. Illusions filled out the card.

On July 16 the Circus World Museum presented the Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee. The feature of the march was the newly restored Ringling Bros. Lion Tableau, resplendent and glittering in \$50,000 worth of gold leaf.

The Royal Hanneford Circus in its European big top was a feature on the Milwaukee parade grounds. The Brothers Grim sideshow was a new addition to the midway. Other attractions were a number of band organs, a wild west encampment, a petting zoo, horse fair, carousel, kiddie circus train, camel and elephant rides.

The museum's wagon shop restored a Ringling-Barnum tunnel car wagon and repainted the No. 50 Great American Circus baggage wagon.

The ring barn on Water Street received a new coat of orange-red paint. Phase two of the rehabilitation of the cars shops train shed was funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Building Commission. A number of rare items were added to the collection including programs and photographs. A prize addition was several John B. Doris lithographs. Paul Ringling, grandson of Alf T. Ringling, donated a number of rare family momentos including forms used on the Yankee Robinson and Ringling Bros. Double Shows and a copy of the first known portrait poster used in 1889. Orin Copple King's voluminous circus notes and files were donated by his widow Martha. A descendant of Harry "Cookhouse" Kelly gave his papers. The heirs of Walter Scholl sold a large quantity of his second circus collection that included programs,



The restored Ringling Bros. Lion Tableau was displayed in the office tent at the Great Circus Parade. Fred Pfening photo.

trade cards and photography. The museum also purchased seven works of circus art by John Steuart Curry.

Bob MacDougall loaned several Ringling-Barnum Circus carriages used during the John Ringling North era. John J. Burke formally deeded over the Hanneford Band Carriage.

During the year museum collections and research director Fred Dahlinger, Jr. assembled two photo books illustrating circus and show trains for a Wisconsin publisher.

Sarasota's John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art was under new supervision after the state of Florida placed Florida State University in charge, taking control on July 1. Dr. Arland Christ-Janer was appointed interim director.

A Sarasota newspaper reported on August 31 that, "Descendants of the Ringling family took issue with the transfer of control claiming the state had violated John Ringling's will. Led by Pat Ringling Buck, a granddaughter of Charles Ringling, and Sally Ringling Clayton-Jones, a granddaughter of Henry Ringling, a suit was filed against the State of Florida."

Sarasota's circus community was concerned if the transfer would affect the expansion of the Ringling Circus Museum. It did not. The Museum Foundation working with the Florida State University Foundation successfully achieved the goal of raising \$1.3 million in cash in just 73 days, meeting a challenge issued by donor

Howard Tibbals in October. These funds supplemented a \$6.5 million gift made by Tibbals. An application was to be made for a state match in the combined funds bringing the total raised to \$15.6 million. The funds will be used to construct and support a new learning center and university programs at the Ringling Center. Tibbals' miniature circus will be housed in the learning center.

On January 14 the Ringling Museum of the Circus honored Silvana Zacchini Meluzzi as Sarasota Circus Celebrity of the year. Joey Hodgini and Alva Johnson were honored as the Power Behind the Scenes.

On January 29 the Windjammers presented a concert at the museum. During the year a number of Center Ring Talks were presented. On January 19 John Herriott spoke, Margie Geiger on February 16, Steve Smith on March 15, Jackie LeClaire on April 19 and Jeanette Williams on May 17.

The International Circus Hall of Fame had its most successful season since moving to Peru, Indiana. The Indiana Department of Transportation granted \$395,000 to the organization. The check was presented to CHF President Tom Dunwoody by Mrs. Judy O'Babbon, wife of the Governor in Peru.

The performance in the European-style big top included Maya Zerbini, dog act; Armondo Cristiani, juggler; clowns Bob Hurley and Rod Wainwright; Darrel Wallen and his horse Ebony King; Lili Esqueda, single trapeze and Doug Terranova with elephants. John Fugate was producer and announcer. Dave Morecraft was musical director. New lighting allowed five night performances.

Terranova gave "Tiger Talks," and Morecraft played the calliope on the lot.

Rosemary Shanks, the new marketing director, was very successful, bringing an increase in attendance.

D. R. and Isla Miller and were inducted into the Circus Hall of Fame. Daughter Barbara Byrd along with husband Geary and their two daughters accepted the award in the

induction ceremony.

The museum exhibits were expanded when eighteen display cases were donated by the Field Museum in Chicago. A new mini-theater was added. The organization received a deed to the property. The Cole Bros. Circus triple hammer stake driver was restored. The south barn was restored, adding rest rooms and concessions. An educational program was developed for 4th grade students.

The Royal British Columbian Museum in Vancouver featured Circus Magicus. Three floors were devoted to the show that included theatrical lighting, a large rear screens, banners and sounds of the circus. An IMAX screen showed a film of Cirque du Soleil. Ten thousand feet of floor space were devoted to circus costumes. There were 250 circus photographs displayed. Peter Gorman's miniature circus was on the third floor. A stage provided live performances of circus artists on that floor.

There were many opportunities for want-a-be circus performers to learn the trade.

The National Circus School of Montreal offered a professional three-year course leading to a diploma in circus arts. It has long been recognized as the premier circus training school in North America.

The San Francisco School of Circus Arts' mission was to encourage and develop potential, character and spirit through circus arts. Its classes included acrobatics, flying trapeze, hand balancing, contortion, juggling, tetterboard, wire walking and clowning.

The Florida State University's Flying High Circus performed at the Hasket Circus Complex in Tallahassee on March 31st, April 1st and April 7th and 8th.

The Sarasota high school Sailor Circus presented its annual performances on March 29 and 30 in its 1,800-seat arena on the high school



Aerial view of the Circus Hall of Fame in Peru, Indiana. Hall of Fame photo.

grounds. The Sarasota Sailor Circus Foundation, Inc. acted in an advisory capacity and raised funds to provide college scholarships to Sailor Circus graduates.

The Peru (Indiana) Amateur Youth Circus was presented for the 41st year. The circus arena was air-conditioned and had new comfortable bleachers.

For the last two years the circus had been invited to send an act to participate in the Premiere Rampe Circus in Monte Carlo in February. Each year the performers returned with awards. In 2000 Eric Pepper and Jessica Mattox appeared in Monte Carlo. The fifteen year olds received the Prince's silver plate award.

The show's Young Americas high-wire performers earned a place in the Guinness Book of World Records with their eight-person pyramid.

The California State University at Fresno conducted a summer workshop from July 9 to 22. The facility included Tandy Beal, Jeff Raz and Jeffrey Gaeto from the Pickle Circus.

The American Youth Circus festival played from August 23 to 26 in the Sarasota Sailor Circus arena. The organization was headquartered in Sarasota. The Illinois State University's Gamma Phi Circus presented performances in Normal, Illinois on April 14 and 15. The Horizons Circus Camp had sessions from June to August in Atlanta. The Circus Arts and Acrobatics School began on June 5 in Roseville, California.

The New York public school's Circus Amok, under the direction of

founder Jennifer Miller, played dates in Harlem, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan from June 22 to 25.

The Wenatchee Youth Circus played Wenatchee, Washington on July 3 and 4 and Orcas on July 8 and 9. Other Washington stands were in Renton, Moses Lake, Vancouver, Shoreline, Metaline and the Chelan County fair.

The Russian/American Kids Circus played a Disney park in Orlando from August 31 to September 5. The children were trained at the New Way Circus Center in Brooklyn, New York. The Flying Gravity Circus appeared at the Pine Hill School in Wilton, New Hampshire in October. The show was produced by Jessica Hentoff. The Berkshire Kids Circus played Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on August 18 and 19.

PETA and PAWS, as well as a number of other animal rights groups, intensified their efforts to ban elephant rides, and in fact all animals on circuses. Heavy lobbying prompted a number of cities and states to consider enacting laws banning circus animals. In most cases their efforts were unsuccessful, but they created plenty of problems for circuses.

A national survey, conducted in May by Market Facts, Inc., revealed that 80% of Americans think animals should be part of the circus, and a majority believed there was already enough regulation to protect the health and welfare of circus animals.

The proposal in the United States House of Representatives to ban elephants rides on circuses and in zoos was heard on June 13. Ringling-Barnum's Joan Galvin and the OABA's Heidi Herriott had lobbied against the bill in prior weeks. Barbara Byrd of Carson and Barnes and Linda Robertson of Circus Vargas attended the hearing, as did Gunther Gebel and Ringling veterinarian William Lindsay.

Bob Barker, a TV game host, was the lead witness for passage of the ban. Kelly-Miller Circus owner David Rawls presented the opposing view as an authority on elephants on circuses.

After hearing all of the testimony was presented, the committee adjourned without taking any action, a victory for the circus.

On February 7 the Seattle City Council rejected a proposal by Mayor Paul Schell to ban circus animals. PETA, PAWS and other groups had lobbied the mayor to present the ban to the council. One councilman was bombarded by over a thousand emails. All appeared to have been generated by animal rights groups. Again, Joan Galvin and Heidi Herriott went to work presenting the other side of the question. The ban was defeated by a 5 to 4 vote.

A committee of the Cincinnati City Council voted not to recommend that it look further into an ordinance to ban circus animals from that city.

A ban on circus elephants, lions, tigers and bears was heard in the Rhode Island House Finance Committee. A dozen or so witnesses, including Herriott and Galvin, spoke in opposition to the proposal. The committee recessed without taking action.

In July billboards were erected in Los Angeles prior to the arrival of Ringling-Barnum by an animal rights organization.

Galvin, a major opponent of animal rights, left the Ringling-Barnum organization in September after seven years service. A lawyer, she had been most successful in protecting the show from suits and local and state government restrictions on circus animals.

The Puyallup City, Washington, council passed a bill on April 17 permanently banning exotic pets.

In the fall the California state government passed a law requiring that a veterinarian be on call at all times during rodeos to treat injured animals.

Kristie Phelps of Norfolk, Virginia, was the most unusual animal protester. Her act was to appear inside



Animal rights protesters in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Paul Gutheil photo.

a small wire cage wearing only orange body paint with a bikini bottom. Phelps made her 13th appearance in Cleveland, Ohio. All presentations were to protest Ringling-Barnum on behalf of PETA. She was arrested in Huntington, West, Virginia. The charges were dropped, as the city attorney did not want the expense of a trial.

The National Animal Interest Alliance presented a positive alternative to the various animal rights organizations.

The year saw a large number of cannon acts. On May 31 the NBC *Today Show* featured multi-cannon owner Dave Smith and some of his family. The bullets were Dave Smith, Jr., Jennifer Schneider, Rebecca Olate and big blast by Dave, Sr.

Other human projectiles were Brian Miser, Luis Munoz, Ermes Zamperla, Sean Thomas, Victor Flores and Jon Weiss, Vesta Gusechkova and Mark Myers on Ringling-Barnum.

On January 14 four circus celebrities were honored on Sarasota's St. Armand's Key. Clown Ernie Burch, wild animal trainer Alfred Court, juggler Truzzi, and animal trainer John Herriott were recognized.

During the year a number of circus people passed away. Among them were Fay Alexander, flying trapeze great; Ron Bacon, circus producer; Ernestine Clarke Baer, trapeze artist and rider; Gus Bell, flying trapeze performer; Frances Bradbury, wife of historian Joe Bradbury; Herman

Brandmiller, circus fan; Rudy Bundy, former Ringling-Barnum executive; Joe Cooper, circus contracting agent; Gordon M. Carver, model builder and historian; Harry Dubsky, circus owner; Ray Dirgo, circus fan and artist; Tommy Houser, manager of the Sarasota County fairgrounds; Paul Kelly, elephant man; El Kigordo, wild animal trainer; Johnny Marietta, circus and railroad consultant; Paul Nelson, horse trainer; Eugene Nock, swaypole impresario; Frieda Pushnik, armless and legless girl; Teresa Ramos; Betty Reid, circus owner; Judy Twomey, wife of circus owner Dave Twomey; and Miles White, former Ringling-Barnum costume designer.

This review would not have been possible without the voluminous amount of material published in Don Marcks' *Circus Report*. During the year it reported a vast amount circus news. Special appreciation goes to Paul Gutheil for photos from the New York City area and Jerry Cash for photos from the Los Angeles area. Don Sandman reported on more circuses than anyone else did.

Other contributors include Albert Beckman, Jim Baker, Bill Berger, Bill Biggerstaff, Joseph T. Bradbury, Chuck Burns, Amos Belizean, Paul Butler, Lee Calvin, Don Covington, Cam Criddlebaugh, Ran Gronso, John Cuneo, Fred Dahlinger, J. Frances Dolphan, Chuck Druding, Hank Fraser, John Fugate, Kent Ghirard, Bobby Gibbs, John Hart, Burt and Sally Harwood, Paul Holley, Paul Horsman, Albert House, Walt Hudson, Paul Ingrassia, Sheelagh Jones, Jim Judkins, Harry Lea Kingston, Jim Lavender, Bob Lessard, Don McGarvey, Frank Mara, Edward Meals, Joseph Meyers, Dick Mong, Donn Moyer, Jerry Nichols, Jack Painter, Richard J. Reynolds III, Peter Rosa, Don Sandman, Ron Sanford, Bill Schreiber, Lane Talbert, Gordon Taylor, Tim Tegge, Richard Via, Herbert Ueckert, Deborah Walk, Joe Welburg, and Dean Whitlock.

A CELEBRATED RIDER

William Sells

By John Daniel Draper

Willie Sells, the adopted son of William A. and Sarah Ann Sells, squandered most of his wonderful opportunities and ended his career in a hand-to-mouth existence. He was a talented rider who in his generation was one of the few who could mount a running horse by leaping from the ground and alighting on his feet on the animal's back. He had the financial support of a wealthy family and early on gained intimate and detailed knowledge of the day-to-day operation and the logistics of a circus. He had, however, an unscrupulous nature toward friend and competitor as well as close relatives such as his own son. Practicing graft, he always preferred a dishonest dollar to an honest one. What he did accomplish of value went for naught. He always maintained that he did not learn that he was an adopted son until his foster mother died when he was about 35 years of age. There is reason to doubt this statement.

The four brothers, Ephraim Sells (1834-1898), William Allen "Ad" Sells (1836-1894), Lewis Sells (1841-1905) and Peter Sells, Jr. (1845-1904), organized the Sells Bros. Circus as a wagon show in the winter of 1871-72 and made "Bros." a familiar part of many circus titles. They had had a small tent show in 1871 that preceded their grand opening the next year. Their father was a farmer who migrated from Woodstock, Virginia to Columbus, Ohio. The boys were brought up in the tradition of hard work. Allen and Lewis often traveled by wagon through the country selling wares and at times followed circuses to benefit from the crowds patronizing the shows.

The initial performance of their show, called the Paul Silverberg Circus for the first two years, was

in Columbus on April 19, 1872. From 1874 through 1877 the show was entitled the Great European Zoological Association, British Museum & Royal Colosseum under the immediate supervision of Sells Bros., or some slight variation of that title. In 1878 it went on rails as Sells Bros. Great European Seven Elephant Railroad Show with railroad equipment from the Montgomery Queen Circus which was sold at auction in Louisville, Kentucky. The title included "Seven Elephant" because both the Barnum Show and the Cooper & Bailey Show

Willie Sells at eleven years of age. Pfening Archives.



at that time had only six elephants.

In 1878 they also launched a new wagon show called Anderson & Co.'s Great World's Menagerie & Circus from Topeka Kansas. The manager of this second show was James P. Anderson for whom Lewis Sells had once worked as a streetcar motorman and conductor. In 1880 Lewis Sells became manager of this show, which was retitled the New Pacific Circus & Menagerie. Their railroad show in 1881 was called Sells Bros.' Millionaire Confederation of Stupendous Railroad Shows. It featured two hippopotami and an electric light plant and announced that it was "the only show that has no 'candy butchers' and peanut & lemonade peddlers."

In 1882 Sells Bros. Circus acquired new railroad cars. The old ones from Montgomery Queen were used to put the New Pacific Circus on rails. The title of this new railroad show was then changed to S. H. Barrett's Circus & Menagerie. Sheldon Barrett, a brother-in-law of the Sells brothers, was the general manager. It was in this year that William Allen Sells sold his share in the circuses to his brothers for \$40,000 with a promise that he would not again enter the circus business. He subsequently became a hotel proprietor in Topeka, Kansas.

The S. H. Barrett Circus continued as the second show of the Sells brothers through 1887 when it was retired. In 1888 through 1890 the Sells show became Sells Bros. & Barrett's Colossal United Shows. The title then reverted to Sells Bros. Circus and continued as such through 1895. In 1896 the Sells brothers and James A. Bailey put the Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. Circus on the road. James A. Bailey bought the show at auction on

January 10, 1905, immediately selling a half interest to the Ringling Bros. It remained on the road through 1911 with the exception of the 1908 and 1909 when it was stored at Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Willie Sells became part of the Sells family when he was adopted at the age of seven by Allen and Sarah Sells. He was born near Burlington, Iowa on April 8, 1865. His mother was Anna Kirkley and his father was unknown. Soon traveling with his foster father on the show, he was a bright and attractive young fellow who early showed great ability in acrobatic tumbling and in equestrian feats. His specialties eventually became the principal bounding jockey act, a 4-horse act and the leaps with double somersaults.

An early mention of Willie is in the June 12, 1875 issue of the *New York Clipper*. The European Zoological Association under the Sells Bros. management had recently been organized to include Richard Rivers and family, Ferdinand Tourniaire, Charles Ewers, Willie Sells, Mlle. Carlotta and Little Viola Rivers.

William Sells appeared on the shows of the Sells brothers through 1889. In 1878, he was listed in the program as the champion amateur bareback rider of the world. He also presented a pony act. Fellow riders were Viola Rivers, Orrin Hollis in his somersault pad act and Charles Ewers in a 4-horse act. By 1881, the boy rider was doing a 4-horse act and a bareback act opposite the great James Robinson. These bareback acts were clowning by Pete Conklin.

An 1881 Sells Bros. herald proclaimed Willie the most precocious bareback rider the world had ever known and a successful rival of veteran equestrians. The next year at age 17, besides being billed as the youngest 4 horse rider in the business, he was a leaper and a jockey act rider. He was also one of the ticket sellers

Appearing in 1883 as a great bounding jockey and 4-horse rider, Willie was again the riding compan-



Sells Bros. Circus 1882 poster featuring Willie Sells. Cincinnati Art Museum collection.

ion of Viola Rivers in her principal bareback act and of Orrin Hollis, a principal somersault equestrian. That year at Franklin, Indiana on August 14th Sells' horse fell during the jockey act, but he was not injured. One month later at Lexington, Virginia he, with most of the company, visited the tombs of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. A Sells Bros. herald for 1884 portrayed Sells as the "flying bareback rider." He also rode a bounding jockey act. James Robinson as the "man who rides" was still on the show. Others were Polly Lee, Adelaide Cordonia in her principal act, Frank Gardner as the great bounding jockey and Mildred Gardner in her side saddle manege. The 1884 S. H. Barrett route book claimed Willie Sells as a member of that company. In fact, it stated that John McMahon, Willie Sells, William Gorman & wife joined the company at Bay City, Michigan on May 19th. It furthermore listed the following as members of the company: Daisy Belmont, Mrs. Lottie Belmont, Mrs. Jennie Ewers, Madam Dockrill, and Charles Belmont. It also mentioned that Sells closed the season on September 29th. This was

the year that everyone was saddened by the news that their friend, Jennie Ewers, had died on April 24th at Bristol, Tennessee.

As one of ten prominent riders on Sells Bros. in 1885, William Sells was the "greatest 7 horse rider" and "flying 7 horse equestrian." Some of the others in this elite group were Adelaide Cordona, Polly Lee, Mildred and Frank Gardner, Allie Jackson, Jerry Bell and William Gorman. At the opening of Sells Bros. in San Francisco on September 18, 1886, floral offerings were presented to some of the best performers such as Willie Sells, Zeno and the Donaldson Bros.

In the spring of 1887, Sells had a very successful six week engagement at Covent Garden in London. The year 1887 was a period in his career when he wished to quit Sells Bros. Circus because he did not receive a financial interest in the show. Later in the year there were references to his having bought a small mule or diminutive donkey for the Sells show and in December of 1887 there was a reference to his having a trained donkey and dogs with the Al G. Field's Minstrels. There was no record of Willie's having been on Sells Bros. in 1887.

However, matters must have smoothed out with his uncles in 1888. William Sells and William

Showles appeared on a lithograph that year and the show listed Willie, Adelaide Cordona, Viola Rivers, William Showles and Don Jeronimo Bell as the five greatest living riders. It was also emphasized that all five were on Sells Bros. for that year and Willie Sells was singled out as the greatest living bounding jockey rider.

In 1889 the two titles, Sells and Barrett were combined. In Display 7 English jockey riding was done by the equestrian meteor William Sells in Ring 1 and American jockey riding was done by William Showles in Ring 2. In Display 21 Sells drove and rode 4 horses in Ring 1 and Adelaide Cordona did likewise in Ring 2.

At the end of the 1889 season, William Sells was chosen by Barnum & Bailey as one of the top riders in America to be sent to England for the winter season engagement at Olympia in London. He was given recognition on the first page of the *New York Clipper* for September 14th: "This young and daring equestrian is a son of Allen Sells, one of the famous Sells Bros. controlling the circus bearing their name. He has for the past six or eight years gained an enviable name as a 1 and 4 horse rider, and has traveled all over the country. Recently he has been engaged by Barnum & Bailey as a representative American equestrian to accompany the Big Show to England. Young Mr. Sells is very popular with his associates under the white tents. He spends his winters in perfecting his education and improving his mind and is a well read and well-informed man. He is the sole heir to a large fortune and last winter, at San Francisco, Cal., he graduated at a business college in a full course of mathematics and book-keeping and has acquired a full knowledge of accounts and business methods." Accompanying this article was a large portrait illustration of Willie.

At Olympia in Display 8, Showles in Ring 1, Sells in Ring 2 and William DeMott in Ring 3 each rode a bareback jockey act. Singled out for special acclaim, Willie was publicized as the "Pride of the Arena, young American Principal Bareback



This drawing of Sells appeared in the September 14, 1889 *New York Clipper*. Circus World Museum collection.

Equestrian Celebrity in unequaled bounding jockey and 4 horse acts. A new illustration of fearless and difficult riding in an original and startling school." In addition, William Showles rode as the "Invincible Champion Bareback Horseman of America and the World" in Display 5 and in the same display, both Josie Demott and her brother, Willie DeMott, rode dashing principal bareback acts. However, Sells had no other offering than the jockey act in Display 8. Willie Sells, "surnamed the Duke of Topeka," set the "English dudes" heads in a whirl by his startling clothes and dashing jockey riding. Billed as a special feature in London, he was called the "Chesterfield of the Arena" because of his elegance.

Sells & Barrett in 1890 issued a lithograph depicting William Sells in a 5 horse tandem race. However, no evidence was found that he appeared on the show that year. Rather, he and his father were involved in getting

him a show of his own. They singled out Charles Andress and his sixteen-car show, which was in financial difficulty. With a one thousand-dollar down payment toward a half interest in his show, they were able to force Andress into bankruptcy. This was the Sells and Andress Circus of 1890, which failed financially at the end of the season. It was bought at the sheriff's sale by William Allen Sells in violation of the pledge that he had made to his brothers. Using most of the Andress equipment, Willie took out the William Sells' Circus in 1891. Quoting the historian Charles G. Sturtevant: "Willie Sells had personality, was intelligent and had a certain amount of ability as a showman and promoter, but behind this was his obsession that the real profits in the circus game was the graft. . . . The circus put out by Sells was heavily billed, and quite a company assembled. When the show closed at Topeka, Kansas on October 12, 1891 the title was found not to be legally in Sells' name, so no salaries were paid, the people informed the show was bankrupt and they were turned adrift." And all the time he had been trading on the good name and reputation of his uncles' Sells Bros. Circus.

This bit of financial trickery was only the beginning of a series of partnerships that took Willie Sells through Sells & Rentfrow (1892-1894), the Great Syndicate Show (1894-1896), Hummel, Hamilton & Sells (1897) and Sells & Gray (1900-1901), in each case bringing financial ruin to the partner with only minimal financial backing on the part of Willie Sells. His plans, most of which never came true, were always large and magnificent. For instance, in September of 1894 it was announced that the Great Syndicate shows planned to sail from San Francisco to Australia on November 15th and that Willie Sells would be in charge. Nothing ever came of this pipe dream for a tour that was to be in emulation of his uncles' successful one of Australia in 1892.

In the case with Sells & Downs (1902-1904), he tried his same scheming tricks but Martin J. Downs was experienced enough to see what was occurring when Sells tried to freeze him out. Downs ended up by

SELLS'
Enormous Circus!
 Museum, Menagerie,
 Caravan of Trained Animals.
 Champion of Champions Headed
 By the Great and Only
WM. SELLS,
KING OF ALL RIDERS!



50 The Largest School of
 Educated Dogs and Ponies **50**
 In The World!

Willie Sells used this ad for his own 1891 circus. Kansas State Historical Society.

changing the name of his circus to Cole Brothers in 1906 and it remained on the road until Downs' death in 1909. This whole scenario, as well as the later personal affairs of William Sells, was very well documented in excellent papers by Sturtevant, George Chindahl and the real authority on Willie Sells' business dealings, Orin C. King. In addition to a very thorough paper, "William Sells, An Inconclusive Study," Mr. King also wrote the book, *The Circus World of Willie Sells*.

Although he took on weight and was no longer regularly training, Willie did do some riding while in managerial roles with the shows mentioned above. In 1892 and 1893 he rode on Sells & Rentfrow Enormous United Shows. The 1892 billing simply stated that "William Sells Will Ride every afternoon and evening and the finest Street Parade ever given in America will take place in the morning at 10 o'clock." In a somewhat longer ad for 1893 at La Junta, Colorado, it was stated that Sells was the "most extraordinary of

bareback equestrians, a veritable living centaur, paragon among all horsemen, none dare to challenge his supremacy, pride of America, wonder of Europe who for 3 months was popular hero of Olympia, London. He received the most enthusiastic recognition from Royalty, Nobility, Commoners and British Press."

An ad for Hummel, Hamilton & Sells' United Shows for November 27, 1897 at Greenville, Mississippi stated: "Mr. William Sells is champion and foremost of all bareback equestrians, acknowledged by press, public and the profession as the most remarkable rider today in the world."

In 1893 the Sells brothers sued Willie and his foster father, charging that when "Ad Sells was paid for his interest in 1882, he made a signed agreement to them not to embark in the circus business again. In violation, he backed Willie in an enterprise using the name 'Sells' and had brought discredit to this name, etc. . . .

In 1898 Willie retaliated by bringing suit against the brothers, charging them with defamation of character, and seeking to obstruct him in every possible way in his rightful use of the name of 'Sells' to gain a livelihood, etc." Neither case was ever settled. Meanwhile Ad Sells died of pneumonia in 1894.

In 1898-99 Willie tried his hand as equestrian director and general agent for the Walter L. Main Circus. From published accounts, Main apparently found him quite talented and reliable in his duties, very remarkable when you consider Willie's usual treatment of would-be managerial partners.

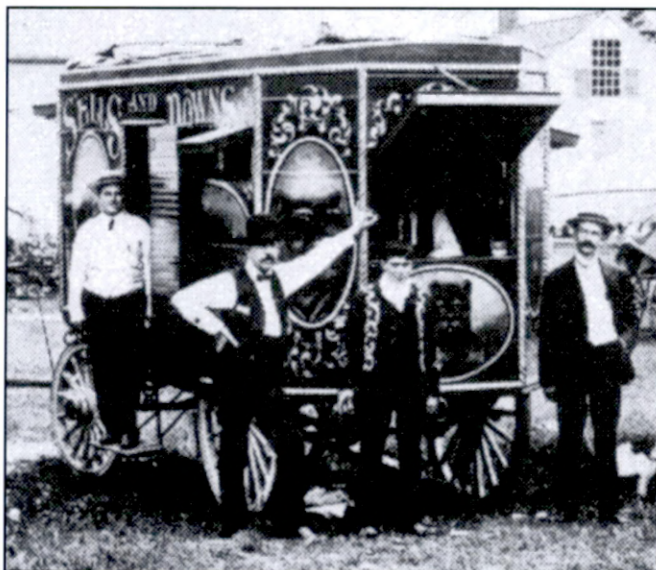
Sarah Ann Sells, widow of Allen Sells, died in 1901. Soon after her death it was reported in the Topeka press that Willie Sells would contest his mother's will. He based his suit on the grounds that it

was the intention of his mother to make another will bequeathing him her property, but that she died too suddenly to do so. In the probated will, he had been cut out entirely because he had protested her second marriage to Simon Greenspan. He furthermore claimed to have been instrumental in helping his mother earn her fortune and that he was entitled to a portion of it. The estate was valued at \$300,000. Mrs. Sells' will left the bulk of her estate to two sisters, Ellen and Emma White, and to Allen Sells, 10 year old son of William Sells. Willie had married Effie Jean Marris of Columbus, Ohio in 1891. They had one son, William Allen (Alan) Sells (1892-1944). In the final settlement of his suit in 1904, Willie received slightly over \$90,000 in real estate (appraised value) and personal property.

In August of 1903 William Sells had lost a suit for \$78,000 against his father's estate for salary due as a bareback rider in his father's circus before he was of age. He cited that at the age of six he had ridden a pony in the ring and that he had been in the circus ever since. The judge ruled that said parents of a child were entitled to the services of the child until he was of age.

When Willie Sells "withdrew" his partnership with Martin Downs, he got in touch with H. H. Tammen of the *Denver Post* and one of the proprietors of the Otto Floto Show.

The Sells and Downs Circus ticket wagon in 1902. Pfening Archives.



Although Tammen knew of the conniving habits of Willie Sells, he yielded to the proposition that a big show titled "Sells-Floto" under the general management of Mr. Sells would "create a furor in the circus world."

The season opened for the new show on April 7, 1906 with a successful tour through the middle west and then into Mexico for over a month. In opposition with Carl Hagenbeck Circus in Mexico, Sells-Floto experienced a decline in business. Sells finally turned a number of acts adrift in Mexico City, leaving them to fend for themselves. When Sells tried to explain his actions to Tammen, he was immediately discharged and was forced to sign over to Tammen "full rights to use the name 'Sells' in connection with his circus in perpetuity."

Willie Sells was out of business once more but he rebounded quickly with a grandiose scheme, a "World Tour circus to travel on its own steamer around the entire globe." Of course this project was never realized. In July another of his dreams was a Great Sells Show which would visit Mexico, Cuba and Panama. The headquarters was listed as Kansas

City and Charles B. Fredericks was named the general agent. His next plan was to take out the Lemen Bros. title in 1908.

Sells-Floto Circus newspaper ad used in Mexico City in 1906. Pfening Archives.

However, on February 17th of that year he died suddenly at the age of about 42 in a New York City boarding house on West 35th Street of a hemorrhage of the stomach. The Topeka *Journal* incorrectly reported Willie's residence as the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The *Journal* carried a lengthy interview with Fred McMann who had worked with Willie for twenty years. McMann put the finger on one of Willie's biggest faults when he said, "The only trou-

CIRCUS TODAY
2 EXHIBITIONS AS USUAL DAILY
AT 4 P. M. and 9 P. M.
DOORS OPEN ONE HOUR
EARLIER TO VIEW A FINE
MENAGERIE.
Paseo de la Reforma Show Grounds.
3 CIRCUSES & MENAGERIES
CONSOLIDATED
THE BIG SHOW OF THE WORLD
SELLS-FLOTO SHOWS.
THE GIFT OF POSSIBILITIES REACHED
MARVELOUS WONDERS, STUNNING, CIRCUS, SENSATIONAL PEOPLE
THIS AFTERNOON,
BENEFIT OF THE
AMERICAN SCHOOL
LAST EXHIBITIONS SUNDAY
Reserved Seats Now On Sale
at Webb's, San Juan de Letran.
Mexican Herald Mexico City
Feb. 11, 30, 1906

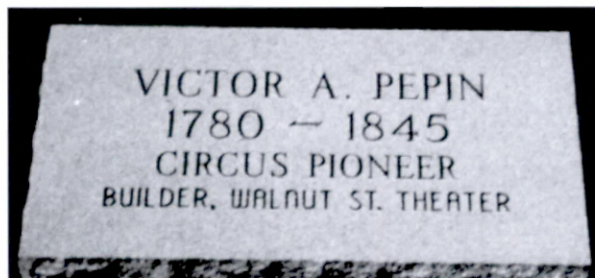
ble with him was that he was too extravagant. He always wanted the best and had no regard for what it cost."

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Circus Historical Society Participates in Marking Victor Pepin's Grave

American circus pioneer Victor A. Pepin died on 21 April 1845, and was buried in Fairview Cemetery in New Albany, Indiana. His grave was unmarked for 155 years until February, 1999, when the Circus Historical Society discovered his grave sight through the efforts of Delane Ferguson, of Coppell, Texas, a great-great-great granddaughter of the famous circus proprietor. Through the Society's status as a tax-deductible charity, it was arranged to have the descendant's make contributions to the Society to purchase a grave marker for their distinguished forbear, which is now in place. Following this action, the local newspaper, *The New Albany Tribune* published a report, and the local public library established a Victor Pepin file to honor the long-forgotten local hero.



PLAN TO ATTEND THE 2001 CONVENTION OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN BARABOO, WISCONSIN

JULY 6 to 10

Reserve your hotel room by June 5

Frank A. Robbins

a most successful failure

PART SIX

By Robert Sabia

1890-traveling the trough

Resiliency: the capacity to rebound without losing shape. As any politician, businessman or actor knows well, along with the plaudits comes the criticism; along with the good times comes the bad; and when you are stretching the furthest, you are the most vulnerable. Frank A. Robbins was certainly vulnerable at the close of the 1889 season. He had lost his show before, but for the first time his reputation was tarnished within his chosen profession. His abrupt departure from the show just before it reached its winter quarters in Middletown, New York must have left a very bad taste with the personnel he abandoned. It made little difference to those unpaid performers that because of some legal niceties, he was beyond the reach of these creditors. The fact remained that Robbins and not John Holmes appeared to be responsible for their plight. Perhaps, because the workmen and performers left penniless were not disposed to writing to the *Clipper* and similar publications about the situation, nothing about the show's closing reached news desks except for the Middletown papers. With the winter setting in and the departure of the helpless show people, the matter was quickly forgotten about, even in Middletown. Robbins had a choice—to demonstrate that he had the capacity to bounce back from the recent troubled tour and start again, or do something else with his life. There seems to have been no question in his mind but to proceed, find new financing, and start another show, perhaps building upon the equipment that already existed in

Middletown. This man was indeed resilient.

On January 11th, 1890, Adam Forepaugh wrote Robbins, apparently in response to a recent letter received from him. It seems that Robbins asked Forepaugh about available circus equipment for sale. Calling Robbins a friend and scribed in such a manner as if he meant it,

Frank A. Robbins Circus newspaper ad used in 1890. Author's collection.

Forepaugh advised that he had two elephants, an 80 foot top with three middle pieces, and the capacity to get two additional middles including side walls at \$25 each. He also had available 30 first class horses and 26 harnesses for them, one stage coach, two 60 foot stock cars, two 60 foot flats, two 42 foot flats and one advertising car. He also had a fair amount of seat planks available. Forepaugh also acknowledged his receipt of a letter from John Holmes which he apparently forwarded to Robbins. Although it is not known if Robbins secured any equipment from Forepaugh, it is clear that at this early date, he intended to field a show for the oncoming season.

Early in January it was reported in the *Clipper* that Robbins would manage the John Robinson Circus. Gil Robinson was intending to retire. Although Robbins remained a good friend of the Robinsons, nothing of substance occurred in this regard. In the January 18th *Clipper*, Robbins announced that he was seeking a whole host of employees for his new show including performers, staffers and advance people. Also in this edition, a letter from John F. Robinson stated that he would be managing his show in 1890 with Gil Robinson acting as his assistant. Robinson further stated that the fact Robbins was putting out his new and big show would preclude him traveling with any other circus.


The March 1st *Clipper* set forth the staff on the 1890 circus: Frank A. Robbins, proprietor and manager; William Loper (repeater), assistant manager;

WAIT FOR THE BIG TWELVE

FRANK A. ROBBINS'

Combination of Twelve Great and Famous Shows: Troupe Circus, Noble Menagerie, Roman Hippodrome, Modern Hippodrome, Museum of Wonders, Double Stables, Human Locomotion, Aviary, and Deep Sea Aquarium.

WILL EXHIBIT AT 1890
Stroudsburg, Saturday, August 9th



100 CIRCUS ARTISTS 100

in all kinds of circus acts. Six Great Acts at one time

More Hippiatrophs, Riders and faster horses than you have seen before.

Follow over our courses with thunderous sound. Arabian and Kentucky's steeds will bound.

North American Menagerie,
operating a world of animal and botanical wonders.

George A. Hill, secretary and treasurer; Neil Smith, assistant treasurer; H. B. Knapp (past repeater), general advertising agent; John Beck, general contracting agent; H. W. Leonard, railroad contractor; Rodney Marr, press agent; N. H. Brooks, press agent; F. E. Scott, manager car #1; John Lewis, manager car #2 (later apparently replaced by J. H. Hammond, who in turn was replaced by George E. Mitchell); William Doris (repeater), manager of the sideshow and concert; W. H. Henderson, super of the bugle brigade; James Warner, superintendent stereopticon exhibition; C. A. Andrews, press agent; D. J. Fitzgerald, forage agent; Charles Lowry, hotel agent; Brother Oran Robbins (repeater), sideshow door tender; James Whalen (repeater), master of canvas. Lucius Foster (multi repeater) was later listed as the master of canvas; A.

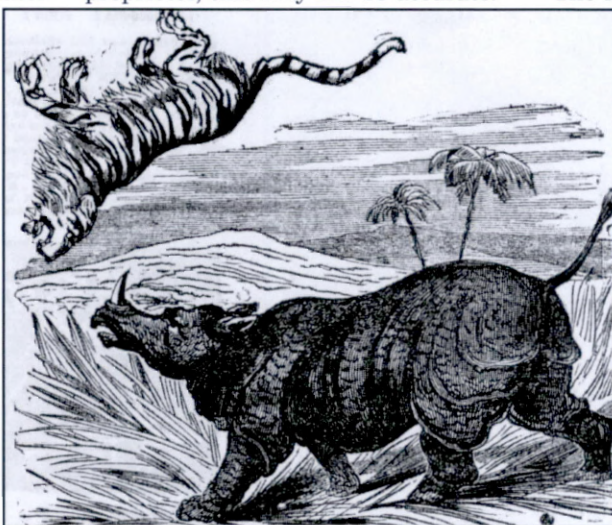
Abrams, master of stables; John Kent, master of transportation; John Kelly, superintendent of chandeliers; F. W. Hodges, manager downtown sideshow; and C. C. Worall and R. Baylis, superintendents of balloon and parachutes.

As can be observed, there were many more new faces than usual. Never one for understatement, Robbins claimed that the canvas was to be new throughout and huge in dimension. For instance, the big top was to be 160 foot round with three 50 foot middles, the menagerie an 80 with three 40 foot middles, the museum a 60 foot with two 40 foot middles, the sideshow a 60 foot with two 40 foot middles, and a dressing top 80 feet by 120 feet. If that wasn't enough, there would also be five horse tents, three dining tents, a cook tent, a blacksmith tent, a harness maker tent, a barber tent, and a downtown sideshow tent 40 foot by 80 foot. There certainly seems like there would be many challenges finding lots big enough to handle all of this canvas.

Yet there's more. There was to be a spectacle entitled "Cinderella and the Glass Slipper." It had a cast of 200 with (hold your hat) 100 ballet dancers. The man had a vision that

wasn't diminished by his experiences just two months earlier. Meanwhile, he was continuing to seek canvas men, drivers, grooms, billers, animal men, train men, and cookhouse personnel. He was also seeking a balloon ascensionist and parachutist.

Although Robbins was listed as the proprietor, this may not be accurate.



George Hill was sometimes listed as co-owner. Hill might have been an investor who traveled with the show. As treasurer, he undoubtedly monitored the daily receipts and expenses. If he was the representative of a group of investors, it would be reasonable to assume that he had authority over the cash flow. Hill remained on the show for its final season the next year as a co-owner. In addition, he was also listed as the Secretary, indicating that the show was now incorporated, probably in New York. Hill was replaced in the role of Secretary-Treasurer later in the season by Clarence E. Allen (repeater), filling the same role as he did in 1889. Hill then became the assistant manager along with William Loper.

In the March 22 *Clipper*, Robbins still sought a variety of performers. He also wanted to purchase elephants, camels, cage animals, Roman chariots and chariot harnesses. It was reported that Fred Durrell, swinging perch; T. G. Scott and wife; South Sea Island Joe; Fred Ladelle, single trapeze; George Nash, cyclist; Johnny Purvis, clown and equestrian director; William Harback, contortionist; John Woodhull, balloonist; Andrew Gaffney (repeater), strong

man; M'lle Ida Shaw, hippodrome rider; and Tony Lowande (repeater), four horse rider were signed for the season. Thomas McGowan was to be the musical director. A "Call" was placed in the April 12th *Clipper* with a reporting date of April 23rd at Middletown, the opening day.

The Middletown *Press* reported on April 23rd that all of the tents had been erected earlier in the week. The big top contained two rings and a stage. The side show had a number of acts including a long hair lady, a six legged cow, a bodiless head illusion, a large den of snakes, and other curiosities. In the menagerie, the assortment of animals was small but soon to be enlarged by a group recently purchased from Barnum which would be delivered when the show played Bridgeport. (Of course, the show never

played Bridgeport so the menagerie wasn't augmented.) The paper noted that six trained dogs arrived a couple of days previous, along with the musicians. Both groups were quartered under a tent right on the lot pending opening day (although not necessarily together). The balloon ascension never took place at Middletown because of the strong winds. There was a good afternoon house which enjoyed the three clowns. Only about 400 people attended the evening performance. The performance was somewhat ragged which was expected by the reporter given the fact it was the opening date. The paper also reported that there were 14 cars on the siding. If there were two advance cars, a 16 car circus was at hand. This is the same size as the previous year. The paper also noted that there was a parade but did not elaborate. There were four coaches that were repainted and renovated at the local D & W car shops. A couple of weeks earlier, the paper advised that after the 1888 season, Robbins rented one of his cars to W. M. Thompson's Glass Blowers Museum. This company became stranded and left the car in Cincinnati. It was brought by Robbins to Middletown in terrible

condition at a cost to Robbins of \$61 and refitted as Advertising car #2. Not a single word was printed about the debacle that took place the previous October. Why ruin the potential for advertising revenue.

The new advertising campaign in the press reflected a new title, Frank A. Robbins' Combination of 12 Great and Famous Shows—Triple Circus, Double Menagerie, Roman Hippodrome, Museum of Wonders, Double Spectacular Pantomime, Aviary and Deep Sea Aquarium. The maxim of the smaller the show, the larger the title was being strictly implemented. The title had to be impressive because the Forepaugh show had Middletown heavily billed for its forthcoming date in early May. Strangely, this date was never played.

The show departed on schedule, headed north for 35 miles, playing the next day at Ellenville; then 65 miles southeast to Suffern, New York on the New Jersey state line; finally crossing the Hudson River at Newburgh to end the week at Matteawan (Beacon), New York on April 26. The balloon ascension in Matteawan created great attention across the river at Newburgh, and a throng of locals gathered at the riverside docks to view the free spectacle. From Ossinger (Sing Sing), New York on April 30th, the show made an extraordinary mid-week jump of approximately 140 miles to Putnam, Connecticut at the northeastern corner of that state. Following two dates in Massachusetts, the show headed south, playing Danielson, Connecticut on May 5th, finally reaching the Atlantic Ocean at Westerly, Rhode Island on May 7th. Business in Westerly wasn't as great as expected because of a strike of the granite-cutters, paving-cutters, quarrymen and the blacksmiths who supported them. The strikers wanted to cut the workweek from 60 to 54 hours while maintaining their weekly wages. It was not a good atmosphere for a circus visit, but it was still a winning date.

The show spent the next eight dates circling Boston, entering the area in the south at Whitman on May 9 and exiting at Woburn on the 17th, northwest of the city. Robbins then

headed into New Hampshire. En route to its date at Epping, New Hampshire on May 22, the show experienced a serious train wreck at 3 a. m. For whatever reason, a flat car jumped the track and the rest of the train piled up behind it. Although there was no reported loss of life, the show suffered serious damages to various railroad cars together with the wagons, chariots and tableaux loaded thereon. Incredibly, the show arrived at Epping in time to give an evening performance to good business. In the June 7th *Clipper*, it was acknowledged that the show sustained heavy losses in the wreck. It claimed that good business continued despite rain, mud and other serious drawbacks. It noted that James Cook was injured by a fall but was slowly recovering. The article further stated that performers Herbert and Bliss (acrobats?), Diolo Bros., Prince Pharoah, and Laura Francis had recently joined.

The wreck was not something this show was financially prepared to handle. Nevertheless, Robbins never hesitated. He went on into Maine where the show played for the next three weeks, gradually going farther north until exiting near Fort Fairfield on June 13 on the way to a date at Fredericton, New Brunswick on the 16th.

The Bangor date on June 7 provides a view of the performance after the disaster at Epping. *The News* said, "The show itself is a very good one and was appreciated by a large crowd at the afternoon's performance. Especially good features were the bicycle riding of George Nash, champion bicycle rider of the world, and the trapeze acting by Fred Ladelle. Mr. Ladelle's feat of balancing himself with a chair upon the trapeze, then suddenly dropping, throwing the chair, recovering himself and

regaining possession of the chair, brought forth shrieks of fright from some of the nervous spectators who expected to see him momentarily dashed to the ground. Other features are the four horse act by Tony Lowande, the performing donkey and the comical clown (John Purvis) who introduced it. The balloon ascension was perhaps the greatest feature, however, to the multitude, many of whom had never seen such a thing done before, and when the daring man, after going to a dizzy height, coolly let himself drop and came down, the quiet of the crowd was broken, and those who had stood with bated breath when first he began his downward flight, broke out into shouts of joy and wonder as his feet came slowly in the ground and the aeronaut stepped lightly forth from beneath the parachute."



The good business came despite poor weather. The paper commented that the show was not in good condition. The parade was scarred from the Epping wreck and never recovered for the remainder of the season. This must have made a negative impression upon the locals and must have depressed business to a marked degree in some locations.

Robbins played many repeat dates during the next three weeks in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, visiting Halifax for a two day stand on June 27 and 28. Just prior to Halifax, while at Kentville, Nova Scotia, Ida Shaw, a bareback rider, fell during her act and lost consciousness. She was taken from the ring and placed under doctors' care. It was feared that the recovery period would be lengthy. St. Johns, New Brunswick garnered big business for the July 1 and 2 stand. In a strange bit of routing, the show re-entered the United States to play only four dates with very substantial rail jumps in the

process, two jumps being well over 100 miles in a single night with a performance the next day. It may be that Robbins was trying to get away from direct competition, but his routing the show to southwest Maine at Norway on July 8, then over to southern New Hampshire at Stratford on the 10th and then the next day going 130 miles directly north, crossing the border into Quebec to play Coaticook on the 11th, stretches the imagination as to the reason. On top of the ambitious rail moves, the show was struck with severe winds at Norway. At 6:15 p. m., the sudden winds struck, lifting the big top which then softly settled with such ease that nary a plank nor pole was broken. It was quickly resurrected by Foster's men. The dressing top was badly damaged but the menagerie top held and sustained little damage. An hour later, the big top was re-erected, made operational and was ready to receive the crowds. The performance commenced as usual at 8:00 p. m. to a big audience. This blow down did little to improve the appearance of the show.

At this point, the show disappeared from the *Clipper's* news columns, never a good sign. We know it continued on its sojourn through Quebec, playing Montreal for two days on July 17 and 18. It quickly crossed into Ontario for dates at Ottawa on the 23rd and Cornwall the next day, the latter town on the border of the United States, opposite Roosevelt town, New York. It is believed that the show entered the United States at this point, but a rigorous newspaper search did not turn up any information until a Waverly, New York date on August 6th. Irwin Bros. played Waverly two days earlier. On August 9th, Robbins was in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania where it enjoyed good business at both performances. It made a short Sunday run to Washington, New Jersey, arriving at 6:00 a. m., All was up and ready by noon. The next day, rainy weather held down attendance at the afternoon performance, and despite clearing, business wasn't much bet-

FRANK A. ROBBINS'
12
BIG RAILROAD SHOWS
 AT
 WAVERLY,
 NOT
UNTIL WEDNESDAY,
AUGUST 6.

ADMISSION ONLY
25 CENTS.

25 CENTS.

WAIT FOR THE ONLY
BIG SHOW,
 COMING TO WAVERLY.
 NOT UNTIL
AUGUST 6.

MUSEUM, MENAGERIE, CIRCUS, HIPPODROME



This ad was used in opposition to Irwin Bros. who was billed for August 4, 1890. Author's collection.

ter under the moon. Very poor business prevailed the next day, August 12, at Hackettstown, New Jersey. The local press commented, "The menagerie consisted of an aged and infirmed bear, a sore backed ostrich, a lima (sic) and a cage of stuffed owls. The ring performance might possibly have been worse, and the twelve 'beautiful young ladies' ought never to appear without veils." Not exactly a rousing endorsement. Dover, New Jersey was visited the next day.

The troupe crossed over the Hudson on Sunday, August 17, in its quest to uncover remedial riches on Long Island. It didn't seem to help. Glen Cove, on the north shore of the island was played on August 19th to nondescript attendance. However, old reliable Huntington came in with two big houses the next day. The performance was enjoyed by the crowds. Port Jefferson, Riverhead and Orient didn't contribute much to the coffers. Too much was happening at Sag Harbor on the 25th to encourage locals to go to the circus. Similar attendance was experienced at Babylon on the 27th and the next day

at Hempstead. In George Odell's *Annals of the New York Stage*, he summed it up best by relating the following: "Frank A. Robbins's Show reached Jamaica for two performances on August 29th. *The Democrat* bluntly affirms that it was 'killed' by the parade in the morning—with dirty, worn-out wagons, only one really 'live' horse, and a poor band of six. Yet the evening show was good. F. Robbins recently, quoted *the Democrat*, 'has had dull business.' I am sorry to learn this of the man whose circus peregrinations on Long Island have so often exercised our devoted pen."

At this point, the show disappeared. A search into Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia revealed nothing. I am inclined to believe that the show folded either in Jamaica or the next day which was a Saturday, possibly in Flushing. In the *Clipper* of October 4th, a snippet advised that the show had closed to the regret of Robbins' friends. It seems to be a belated entry if the show closed on the last of August. On the other hand, it is clear that the company folded, and as such, may not have been timely in reporting this gloomy news. One reason to believe that the closing was in late August was that the show opened the next year in Flushing, Queens at which location it probably wintered, if you can call it that.

On October 25, John Holmes advertised a circus outfit for sale in the *Clipper*. He offered nine good cages, twelve good baggage wagons, two good ring horses, eight good bronchos and buckers, one 120 foot round top, new; quarter poles and side poles; one silver tip bear, weighing 500 lbs; llama, about 6 foot high; one white deer; one flat car, 50 foot long; bedding and outfit for circus. The bear without the aged descriptor and the llama seem to match the Hackettstown press report. The "new" 120 foot big top may have been a replacement unit for the one in the

Norway blow down. There is little doubt that this is the Frank A. Robbins residue.

Was he downtrodden? Was he full of regrets? It doesn't seem so. In the November 22nd *Clipper*, it was reported "Frank A. Robbins and Alf. Ringling were among last week's *Clipper* callers. Mr. Ringling was in town looking for the arrival of a steamer carrying an elephant, several hyenas, leopards and other animals for next year's tour of the prosperous Ringling Show. Mr. Robbins, who was entertaining his visitor to the best of his ability, states that there will be a thoroughly equipped and reorganized show on the road in 1891, bearing the Robbins name. The details are not yet complete." Before you scoff, you should duly note that he did just this. Resiliency by any other name was Frank A. Robbins.

1891-there's no business like

Now let's see. We have lost our show for three consecutive years and closed an unsuccessful engagement at a winter circus in New York City which was equivalent to losing a fourth show. What does this mean? Simply this: It leaves a considerable area for improvement. Lots of upside potential. And this is how Frank A. Robbins must have viewed the wisdom of putting out another show for the 1891 season. Somehow he convinced others to put some monies into the enterprise because it is doubted if he personally had the financial wherewithal to generate the get-away money. He always did have the support of his colleagues in the industry. On December 31, 1890, Al Ringling sent a short letter to him: "Friend Robbins. I mailed you some time ago one of our route books. Did you receive it. Everything is progressing nicely with us. Hope you will get out in good shape and have a good season. My brothers send regards to you."

In the January 17th *Clipper*, there was an impressive want ad. For the first time, the show was highlighting that it was a corporation. "Frank A. Robbins New Shows Incorporated. People in every branch of the Circus Business, Cowboys, Indians, Mexicans, Vaqueros, Arabs,

Japanese, Riders, Gymnasts, Acrobats, Aerialist, Wire Walkers, Rope Dancers, Hippodrome Artists, Concert People, Performing Animals and anything Odd, Strange or Curious. Also a General Agent, Contracting Agent, Men to Run Advertising Cars, a Boss Canvasman, a Master of Transportation and a Band and Orchestra." His mailing address was 201 Centre Street in New York City which was in reality the business address of his long-time friend Samuel Booth who located the offices of his show printing business there.

This ad resulted in some response because shortly thereafter, the *Clipper* of January 31st advised that Gus A. Bernard (repeater) came aboard as the railroad contractor and general agent; Clarence Farrell, treasurer; John Purvis (repeater), equestrian director; A. Abrams (repeater), boss hostler; and Broncho Bob and his cowboys. The show was on ten cars, including one advance car.

More news was contained in the February 14th *Clipper* which stated that Wm. J. Doris (repeater) would be back as manager of the sideshow and concert. John (Tony) Burke (repeater) was to be responsible for downtown ticket sales and W. S. Randolph was to have the buffet car. Robbins also signed DeVelde and Zola, aerialists. J. R. Tucker was to fulfill the contracting agent's position while Charles Roskam would be billing, attached to Ad Car #1 under manager George E. Mitchell (repeater). Ad Car #2 was under the management of W. F. Hickley. H. W. Leonard was identified in the strange position of counsel. Presumably this term was intended to reflect a legal responsibility other than the traditional fixer. J. M. Curtain was identified as a "Special Manager," whatever that meant. George Barstow and his wife were added to the concert. Seniorita

Elsa, aerialist, was back again for her second year on the show. As late as March 21st, the *Clipper* contained a want ad for performers including aerialists, jugglers, musicians, and sideshow and concert people. Apparently James J. Burns was back as bandmaster as the ad requested musicians to write directly to him. But Robbins wasn't only seeking help, he was also selling equipment. In a *Clipper* ad, he offered two stock cars, one flat, a performing den, a sea lion den, two small cages and a devil-fish for sale. No prices were mentioned. He was also seeking a sleeper.

At the outset of the season, confusion was already evident. The May 2nd *Clipper* reported that the Frank A. Robbins New Shows would begin the season at Flushing on May 2nd.



This information came from George Mitchell who as manager of Ad Car #1, should know where he was billing the show. Yet the next issue of the *Clipper* stated that the show opened its season on May 2nd at Stapleton (Staten Island), New York to

packed houses. My money is on Mitchell being correct. Stapleton seems to have been played on Monday, May 4th and Port Richmond, also on Staten Island, was played the next day. The first local report that we have is for Bayonne (Bergen Point), New Jersey on May 5 which was about a mile from Port Richmond across the Van Kull Kill.

The *Bayonne Times* noted the show played in a snow squall. More importantly, it said that "Though the weather was extremely cold and disagreeable there was a large attendance, but the show was not what it purported to be on the posters and it was severely criticized by a large majority of those who attended the performances." Granted that it was early in the season but this is the

was also a principal. It reported that "THE FRANK A. ROBBINS NEW SHOWS, with Frank A. Robbins and Geo. A. Hill at the helm, have been doing a splendid business ever since the start, and the performance is being constantly strengthened. Geo. Nash, trick bicycle rider, and Rosina Dubski joined last week [both repeaters]. Johnny Purvis and his donkeys amuse every one. The Wild West, led by James Kidd and Broncho Bob, is very strong. The parade is better than ever, and everything looks bright, fresh and clean. Clarence Farrell is in the ticket wagon, and Bill Doris handles the privileges. The sideshow is also proving a big winner."

Two weeks later, the *Clipper* of June 6 noted: "The FRANK A. ROBBINS NEW SHOWS continue their triumphant march through Pennsylvania. Business is at the top notch, and everything is harmony and peach. New performers and new features are constantly being added. Baggensen's contortions are a mystery to the people. Geo. Nash on his bicycle, catches all the wheelmen wherever we go. Geo. Austin, on the floating wire, is also a feature. Johnny Purvis and his donks still amuse. Jim Kidd's Wild West had another addition of six ponies and two genuine cow punchers last week. The show is very strong all around. W. J. Doris still runs the privileges and has a very attractive sideshow." It may be that Robbins was in fact adding performers to the lineup. Baggensen was probably the contortionist who was mentioned in the Doylestown paper. It was also the first mention of George Austin on the slack wire.

As if to dissuade the inevitable, a third significant mention was set forth in the *Clipper* of June 13th. "FRANK A. ROBBINS' NEW SHOWS have been doing a splendid business the past week, despite rainy weather. The show has several very strong acts and pleases the public very much. In fact, the Wild West and the hippodrome races fairly raise the people off the seats. A new menagerie top was put up June 6 [at Emporium, Pennsylvania]. A race, between Mamie Haswich, Pearl Higbee and Edna Kidd, is run strict-

ly on its merits, and creates the greatest enthusiasm every night. The Wild West portion of the entertainment is one of the best of its kind now on the road. Jim Kidd and his cow punchers seem to hit the popular taste. Elva Gongazcles and Mons. LaDeli, on the traps and rings, are very fine. Johnny Purvis is equestrian director, and runs the show in good shape. The sideshow, under the direction of the veteran Bill Doris, is doing a land office business. Manager Robbins is with the show every day, and keeps his weather eye on everything. Thos. McGowan, the old time leader, has a band of fifteen mouthpieces, and makes a big hit. Everybody is well contented." Mnes. Haswick, Higbee and Kidd are new names with Edna Kidd being probably the wife of the wild west's Jim Kidd. Elva Gongazcles must be Senorita Elva. Mons. La Deli doesn't appear to have been previously mentioned. Thomas McGowan was the bandmaster from the 1890 season and at some time must have replaced James Burns. After this point, the *Clipper* became ominously silent on the show's activities.

Although the *Clipper* had nothing to report, it didn't mean that local newspapers were not aware of the ominous character of the show. *The Elk Democrat* (Ridgway, Pennsylvania) in its June 11 edition reported the following under the headline "Look out for Fakirs. . . . It would certainly deem that Ridgway sports would not have to be warned against gamblers in view of the way they were worked by the last circus, but to enable us to say we warned them we take the liberty of copying the following from the *Renovo News*, relative to Robbins' circus, which shows here the 16th: Chief of Police Berry received the following letter this morning:

"Towanda, Pa., June 2, 1891. Chief of Police, Renovo, Pa. Dear Sir: Permit me to call your attention to

the Frank A. Robbins show that strikes your town on Thursday of this week [June 4]. They are a bad gang of gamblers and bunco steerers. They were pulled at DuShore [May 26], Towanda [May 27], Athens [May 28] and Wellsboro [June 1]. The way they work is to bribe the police in every town they show in and go in and skin the people. I have also written Chief Westbrook, a friend of mine at Lock Haven [June 3]. Very Truly, Gus C. Hollen, Constable and County Detective."



Did this advance warning stop our friends? Apparently not because in its June 11 edition, *The Elk Democrat* related "Frank A. Robbins Great Aggregation of Collosal (sic) Fakes exhibited in this city Tuesday. It was

perhaps the worst crowd of cut-throats and thieves that ever traveled with a canvas. Their entire show from the free street parade to the gambler's paradise in the side show was rotten in every particular. The street parade consisted of one fourth-class band and some canvasmen, riding upon horses, who had allowed the dirt to accumulate upon their faces until they were supposed to resemble copper-hued Indian braves. The circus performance was the rankest ever given in this city. The program with but one or two exceptions was made up of a number of superannuated chestnuts that might have been passable 'some twenty years ago.' Gambling was carried on openly both on the ground and in the side show, and the three shell game claimed its usual number victims. Merchants, mechanics, and all classes and conditions of men except printers, and even men high in church circles, added their mite to the pile that went to make up the gambler's mint of ill-gotten gains. The management of the show had a large amount of 'green goods' in their possession and woe unto the man who didn't have the exact amount to

pay for a purchase. He invariably found that his change consisted of counterfeit money, both metal and paper. There is no more unprincipled or dishonest set of men on the road today than the crowd connected with Frank A. Robbins' circus." How far the mighty had fallen.

A bit more information comes from an unexpected source which in two years time would loom large in the life of Frank A. Robbins. The 1891 *Route Book of Hunting's New Railroad Shows* was authored by Charles Griffin who later wrote *Four Years in Europe with Buffalo Bill*. In any event, the Hunting show was playing the same general territory as was Robbins. Hunting played DuBois, Pennsylvania on June 15th, only three days after Robbins, to big houses, far exceeding the attendance of the larger Robbins outfit. On that day, Robbins was about 15 miles away at Brockwayville. At the latter town, Hunting played to fair houses on June 17th. Griffin noted: "People coming out our sideshow, say: 'Better than the whole Robbins' Show,' etc. We know that such is not the case, and why should they make such remarks? In my estimation it is the bitter feeling engendered by the 'fakirs' with the aforesaid 'Robbins' Show.'"

The next day at Ridgway, Hunting once again had a big day, turning them away at night. It was just three days behind Robbins. The last relevant entry was a sad one; at Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, on September 10th. Mr. Griffin stated: "Frank A. Robbins' Show came to grief here July 11. Some of his people are still in town." The hanging rope had drawn taut and its victim drew its last breath.

The *Clipper* of July 18th had this brief entry: "The property of the Frank A. Robbins Circus and Menagerie, which exhibited at Huntingdon (sic), Pa., July 11, was seized by the sheriff 13, and has been

advertised for sale 21. Besides local claims, there is a \$4,000 due in labor claims and \$3,500 on a confessed judgment."

The following *Clipper* elaborated. "FRANK A. ROBBINS' SHOW ended its brief tour of nine weeks with its performance at Huntingdon, Pa., July 11. Sheriff Wilson, of that place, took charge of the outset, by virtue of executions and attachments, amounting to nearly \$4,000. Mr. Robbins' troubles began at Greensburg, Pa., where he was compelled to leave behind four horses to pay a debt. At Johnstown he was the subject of another attachment, and when he arrived at Huntingdon the climax was reached, as constable after constable, and finally the Sheriff, levied upon the animals and circus paraphernalia. The property was advertised to sold at auction 21. The claims amount to about \$8,000. George A. Hill and Mr. Robbins have returned to New York City, and the



latter was a *Clipper* caller July 20. Mr. Robbins explains the show's failure on the ground that it was from the start handicapped by lack of a parade and a menagerie. 'On the lot' the outfit was excellent, and the company, he says, gave a good performance. But the expenses were heavy, and the business was not up to the expectations of the projectors. About three or four weeks' salaries are due to the people, the musicians being more unfortunate than the others. Mr. Robbins expresses his determination to do all he can to square up the debts contracted. During the entire trip, he says, he drew only \$150 for himself. He will probably join another circus soon, in an executive capacity, and when he resumes circus proprietorship it will be under different auspices. At Trenton, N. J., July 16, there was filed in the Court of

Chancery a bill for an injunction in the case of John Sullivan, of Detroit, and Thomas R. Capithorn, of Rochester, N. Y., against the Frank A. Robbins Co. The bill set forth that the advertising car of the show is lying in the yard of the Pennsylvania Railroad Co., in that city; that the other rolling stock and property of the company is at Huntingdon, Pa., and is advertised for sale on the 21st of July; that the company owes Sullivan \$30 for wages and Capithorn \$20, and asked for an injunction enjoining and restraining the company from selling the car and prohibiting the Pennsylvania Railroad Co. from removing or permitting the car to be removed. Vice Chancellor Bird granted an order requiring the Frank A. Robbins Co. to show cause on July 21 why a receiver should not be appointed."

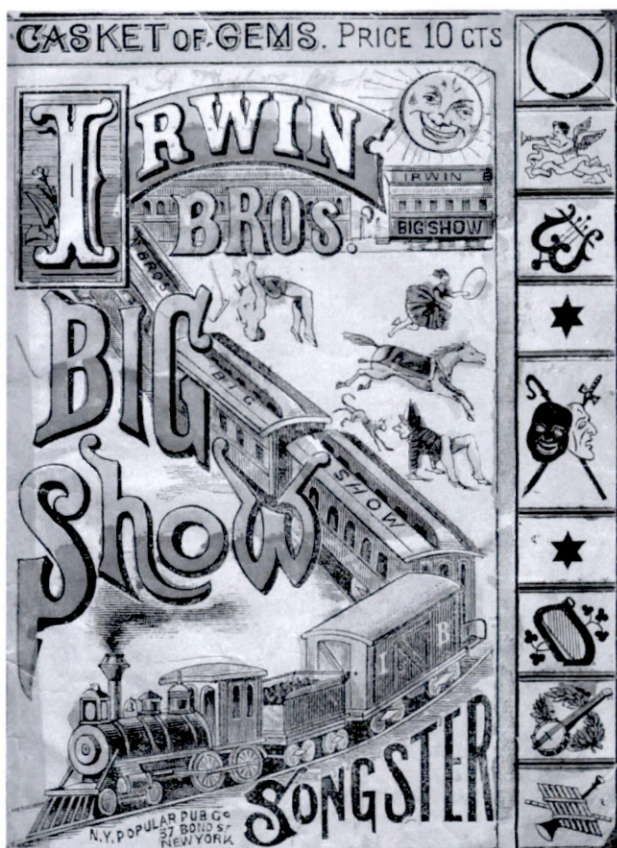
A few observations on the foregoing *Clipper* article. When Robbins stated that the show lacked a parade and menagerie, we know that it is not literally accurate. The company lacked a meaningful parade and menagerie. Both consists were slim and unattractive by any measure and didn't generate any business by their presentation. We also know that the show's performance had been greatly criticized by the locals so "word of mouth" recommendations from those who witnessed the afternoon performances were probably non-existent. As it relates to the New Jersey activities, it would be reasonable to assume that Messrs. Sullivan and Capithorn were members of the advance attached to the car in question. Lastly, it doesn't seem likely the show had the alleged heavy expenses, given the paucity of performers and the absence of headliners such as Charles Fish and the Jeal Sisters.

The final few days of the show reveal a tale of continuous woe toward self destruction. Robbins played Greensburg on June 7, one day behind Washburn and Arlington. It actually placed newspaper ads there which it hadn't done at many of its recent stands. Very slim crowds attended while wholesale gambling and thievery took place. Robbins was quoted as saying that "... when he started on the road this season he

had a fine show, but that he has played to poor business and most of his good people have left him. His employees say that he is a 'good fellow' and all that, but that he drinks all his show makes." This is the first revelation regarding what may have been a serious drinking problem. His marriage was in disarray and now his circus was on its last legs. That he drank is not particular surprising. The real question is whether the drinking caused the downfall or did the downfall form the basis for the drinking. I suspect the latter.

In any event, the *Westmoreland Democrat* in Greensburg, Pennsylvania followed with additional information in its June 15th issue. "Robbins circus, which held forth here, Tuesday of last week, had considerable trouble before they got out of town. Executions were issued by Messrs. H. S. Coshey, Frank Shearer and Mechling Bros., for bills contracted, and several employees also sued for wages due. The various claims amounted to \$250, and it looked for a while as though the show would remain here all summer, but the trouble was finally adjusted. The manager [Robbins] was arrested on a charge of gambling, preferred by David Musick of Irwin, who claimed that he had been beaten out of \$87. The case was settled by the manager paying Musich \$50 and costs and the concern finally wiggled out of town. The people with this show are a bad set." It was reported that the show had to sell four horses and a bandwagon in order to satisfy the claims.

After playing Derry the next day, the show arrived at the large city of Johnstown on June 9. Again it followed Washburn and Arlington, this time by five days. There was a late arrival. The *Johnstown Weekly Democrat* panned the performance as not being as advertised and generally poor. The *Johnstown Tribune* advised of additional problems: "Frank A. Robbins circus, after showing to poor audiences in the afternoon and evening yesterday, managed to get out of town about 5



Irwin Bros. provided opposition for Robbins in 1891. Pfening Archives.

o'clock this morning on the P. R. R. It is billed for Hollidaysburg today. But one attachment was issued against the concern while it was here—a bill of \$28 due on one of the employees for wages. Justice Bland heard the case this morning, and Robbins paid the bill. Other attachments were threatened, but Robbins succeeded on getting them staved off. It is likely that the concern will go to pieces at Hollidaysburg." It did not. It went to pieces the next day at Huntingdon.

All four newspapers of Huntingdon carried news of the circus' demise. The *Huntingdon Journal* reported the "Frank A. Robbins circus, which was extensively advertised to exhibit in Huntingdon Saturday last turned out to be a regular fizzle. . . . A large parade was expected but when the band appeared upon the streets walking and no horses to be seen, suspicions arose that something was evidently wrong. They gave their first entertainment in the afternoon and it was so poor that the news quickly spread. As usual at the close of the entertainment an announce-

ment was made that an exhibition would be repeated in the evening, etc. . . . The band who had not been paid for months refused to work until their payment was made and therefore the show went to pieces. . . . The principal creditor is Wm. Powley, one of the managers, who has entered judgment against the show for \$3,000."

However, the *Huntingdon Monitor* provided the greatest details on the show itself and is the source of the following articles in its June 16th and June 23rd editions respectively. On June 16th it observed: "Since the Frank A. Robbins circus left winter quarters on Long Island, on the 2nd of May last, the expenses necessary in managing the institution have been greatly in excess of the receipts, and it is not a surprise that

the proprietor has been compelled to disabandon the affair because of financial embarrassment. A crisis was reached soon after the arrival of the circus here last Saturday, and now the whole institution is in the hands of Sheriff Wilson.

"Actors, actresses and other employees on that day demanded their pay which they claim had not been forthcoming for six weeks, but the proprietor claims to be without a dollar, and the demands were naturally ignored. Through his attorney, one William Powley has issued an execution for \$3000 against The Frank A. Robbins New Shows, Incorporated Circus and Amusement Company, and the personal property of Frank A. Robbins will also have to answer for two foreign [other states] attachments to the amount of \$800. in favor of Carl R. Baggesen and Walter Romelo.

"Frank A. Robbins, the proprietor, has been connected with a circus for a number of years, and is regarded as a good showman and whole-souled fellow, but this year he has been 'playing in hard luck.' When the show was at Greensburg last week

an attachment was served on his property and four horses and a band wagon were left there to satisfy the show. The proprietor also experience similar trouble at Johnstown and Hollidaysburg, but the end came at Huntingdon.

"Everything belonging to the circus is now in the hands of Sheriff Wilson, from the nine railroad cars side-tracked in West Huntingdon, all the canvas tents, twenty-five horses, twenty wagons, down to the bear and fat pig. These things will all be offered for sale by the Sheriff on Monday morning next, at 9 o'clock. The employees of the circus—at least many of them—are in straitened circumstances. The original number of persons connected with the show is nearly two hundred, and the amount of money due each of them, as claimed, is from \$15 to \$100. Those who remained at the tents were furnished with meals by the Sheriff until Monday morning. Many have since then left town.

"A gentleman named W. J. Doris conducts the sideshow and a foreign attachment for \$350 has been issued against him by Rozey Jean. This document was executed on Monday afternoon.

"The employees are greatly attached to Robbins but it seems all are doomed to ill luck. Some say that last year Robbins' profits in the business were \$50,000." Show biz to the end.

The auction results were set forth in the July 23rd edition of the *Monitor*. "The property . . . was disposed by Sheriff Wilson Tuesday morning last. The articles included in the sale were nine cars, about fifteen horses, twenty wagons, canvas tents and a bear. The total amount realized from the sale was \$1,681, the nine cars being knocked down for only \$105. The other articles were disposed of for like small amounts. Constable Samuel Coder also conducted a sale, horses only being included in his list and he realized about \$219.

"The proceeds of the sales will be considered very small when it is known that William Powley's claim was for \$3,000 and the aggregate claim of actors, actresses and labor-



ers amounted to upwards of \$2,000. Then a freight bill of \$461, due the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, is to be recovered from the realization of the sales.

"The laborers and Indians have fared the worst of all. Many have remained here nearly two weeks with scarcely a cent in their pockets, in the hope that after the sale their claims would be satisfied. Such, however, was not the case. They were given certificates by the proprietor who acknowledged his indebtedness to them, but discount the certificates was another matter: people were not anxious to hold the paper.

"Several of our townspeople were purchasers of horses, the prices paid for the animals ranging from \$17 to \$85. The investments were profitable to some at least. One gentleman who bought two horses sold them the same day at a profit of \$50. A representative of Walter L. Main's Circus was the purchaser of the menagerie, a bear and one of the circus wagons. The bulk of the property was knocked down to George H. Orlady, Esq. who bid to the interest of his client William Powley.

"By this time nearly every one connected with the show has left town. The Indians are still here, although very anxious to get away. They belong to the Iroquois tribe and want to return to their native haunts near Montreal, Canada, but have no money."

Meanwhile the performers presented *ad hoc* renditions of their acts before local audiences, collecting some monies in the process. The champion bicyclist George Nash, and the Henry Brothers, gymnasts, were identified as especially active in this regard. Professor W. E. Thom of Erie, Pennsylvania, who was previously the show's band leader took a temporary position as band master for a local festival being held shortly.

Apparently others, less skilled, had other means of augmenting their meager fortunes as a rash of burglaries were reported in Huntingdon and environs until the employees of Frank A. Robbins gradually melted away.

In the *Clipper* of August 8th was a note that Walter L. Main had added three cages of animals from the Frank A. Robbins' Show, with one new flat car 62 feet in length and one box car. From the way the note was written, it is not clear if the flat and stock cars came from Robbins.

Why did this happened? Did Robbins lose his magic touch? Did he somehow choose to violate one of his basic tenets, that of always presenting a more than credible performance? It doesn't seem to be the case. Most likely, he ran out of money and was unable to convince quality performers to join his show on the come. The real problems started in late 1887 with the financing of the Winter Circus. He never got out of that hole. Instead, he was in a whirlpool heading steadily into the vortex. The rich tours that he had experienced in the 1885 to 1887 seasons were never replicated in the 1888 to 1891 seasons. There just was no business, or at least enough business. A cardinal sin of business is overreaching; sometimes one is lucky but more often overreaching ends in disaster. Just ask the investors in Planet Hollywood, Boston Market and *The Wiz*, all great ideas that ran out of money. Add Frank A. Robbins to this list.

Is this the last of our hero? Highly unlikely. Anyone who could form five shows in five consecutive seasons, lose them all—each year—is not going to be defeated by this minor setback. After all, the man was only 35 years old and that there were many opportunities to pursue in the future. Youth must be served!

It was reported in the December 5th *Clipper* that Frank A. Robbins was in his 15th week of fairs and was doing quite well. In the *Clipper* of February 6th, 1892, he was still in the South with his specialty show. All's Quiet on the Southern Front—but not for long.

Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART SEVENTEEN

By David W. Watt

Editor's note. The dates listed are the days the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Gazette.

August 22, 1914

For more than thirty-five years, the general manager of the advance of several of the larger circuses has been a man by the name of Louis E. Cooke. Mr. Cooke in the early '80's was advance manager for the Adam Forepaugh shows and remained there in charge of the advance until the death of Adam Forepaugh on January 24, 1890. When the show was sold to Cooper and Bailey, Mr. Cooke remained in his old position until the consolidation of that show with the Sells. Bros. At that time, Mr. Cooke went to the Barnum Show where he remained some years, and later was in advance of the Two Bills show and stayed with them until they went to the wall, more than a year ago in Denver, Colorado.

Although Mr. Cooke owned one of the finest hotels in Newark, N. J., less than twelve miles from the courthouse in New York City, and has plenty of this world's goods, this did not seem to satisfy him. It was not so long before he commenced to look around to see what he might do to keep on in the busy life that he had led for so many years. He finally dropped into the office of Miller Bros. & Arlington, owners of the 101 Ranch No. 2 Wild West, which was to go directly to London and open up there after an unlimited engagement.

The organization carried with it the best in that line of work possible to engage and it was early in May that they opened in London to an enormous business with Louis E. Cooke as the general manager. The Miller Bros. & Arlington as well as Mr. Cooke were very proud of the show that they had sent to Europe and the business that it was doing.

Something like six weeks ago, Joe Miller took a trip to Europe where he spent a short time with the show. Their intention was to remain in Europe for some years and make all the principal towns and cities in the different countries. But Joe Miller had only been home a short time when war was declared and the entire country seemed to go war mad. The receipts in a few days dropped more than eighty percent and a few days later the show had to close. The final straw that broke the camel's back came when they confiscated more than 100 of their great horses. This last crash came when the average performer with the show had little money, and the cry over the show soon "Oh, if we were only back in America."

Louis E. Cooke general agent. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.

The people with this show are only a small part of those in the business whose homes are in this country and who are stranded there. Many of them are without means to return home. But Mr. Cooke is expecting to make arrangements for the return of all his company to this country as soon as possible, for conditions in that country are such that they expect it to be years before anything in the line of entertainment can be made a success. A letter from London gives us the following information: "The 101 Wild West show at the Exposition has been hard hit. If last Monday's reports can be refined upon, the government has deprived the mall horses used in this enter-

tainment. No option was granted. Either Louis Cooke, Zack Miller, Johnny Baker and the rest of the officials had to content themselves with notes on the treasury in payment for the horses or else they would have been condemned on the charge of having some disease, only to be later confiscated for military purposes. Some of the cowboys have enlisted in the British army, whereas others together with cowgirls and other members of the show are bending every effort to obtain whatsoever passage possible back to America. The contract under which this mammoth production appeared at the

Exposition is automatically suspended, and it is understood that the entire aggregation, except those who enlisted in the British cause, will be back on these shores within the next three weeks if navigation can be kept open. Last Monday was a Bank Holiday in London and resulted in large business for all shows. Now, however, it is almost impossible to lure anyone out on the grounds. Salaries on all sides are being paid in paper money for which the equivalent

in change is very difficult to procure at the present time. Many American acts that had passage booked on several liners that were to have left this week, were rudely confronted with the impossibility of returning, the result of the sudden appropriation of the ocean liners for purposes of war."

In my early career in show business, I met at different times, men who had made a reputation the world over in many different ways. In '82 we were showing in the different towns in Pennsylvania and finally up



into the famous oil districts of that state. There were several towns like Meadville, Titusville, Oil City and many others, and all these towns in that day were without a parallel, for it was in these towns where the famous oil well had been struck, and in a few days these towns of a few hundred inhabitants would grow to many thousands. Titusville, Meadville and Oil City were mostly in valleys between the mountains. We arrived in Oil City on Sunday morning and were to show there Monday.

At that time all the people with the show were put at a hotel, and the show grounds were on top of a mountain. The town was the worst one to get to that I ever saw in the business, for the route wound around the mountain nearly a mile before you could get up to where was level ground enough to put up the tents.

Sunday morning I was about ready to go to the show grounds and settle up the week's business when the landlord of the hotel asked me if he might not accompany me up to the grounds. We had just stepped out on the sidewalk when the landlord said, "Mr. Watt, I want to introduce you to a friend of mine, Mr. Steele." And putting his hand on John Steele's shoulder he said to me, "You have no doubt heard of John Steele before, but possibly not under that name. This is the notorious Coal Oil Johnny."

The stories go that he squandered more than three fourths of a million dollars and that he worked on the streets, but at this time he was a plain appearing man such as you would only expect to meet.

He accompanied us up to the show grounds and took much interest in the raising of the tents and the careful painstaking way in which the show wagons were taken up around the mountain. But at this time I did not think so much about it, for excitement of our own business and the meeting of different characters all over the country, and Coal Oil Johnny at that time did not seem to appeal to me to any great extent.

With the possible exception of John D. Rockefeller, Coal Oil Johnny is

going down in history as the foremost oil country character. There never will be a greater spendthrift. Other men have since spent more money, but Johnny holds the record for speed. And he did his spending back in the days when it was almost hard to spend big sums, when women wore calico wrappers to church and when a good meal could be bought for a quarter.

Coal Oil Johnny's real name was John Steele. He was an orphan boy and had been adopted by a widow named McClintock. One of the best oil properties of the early days was struck on the McClintock farm along Oil Creek, Pennsylvania. Johnny became an oil country teamster, hauling barrels of oil and the wooden casing that was used before the days of iron pipe. One morning while he was driving along a country road, a neighbor came running wildly across the field, shouting that the widow McClintock had died and left Johnny all her money.

The story runs that Johnny climbed right down from his seat and left the team standing in the road. He never sat on it again. It seems that he temporarily went money mad. He began to spend his fortune and never stopped until he was dead broke. He was an open-hearted fellow. In a few days he was on the road with the motley aggregation surrounding him. The rounders trooped in and helped him spend; the sharks took him in tow and began to trim him.

His ways of spending money were very spectacular, and for weeks even the old conservative newspapers had column after column about Coal Oil Johnny. From a few of his escapades we can gather a good idea of the life while the money lasted. To this day they will show you the street corners in Titusville where Johnny lit his cigars with ten-dollar bills. He rode through the streets of Meadville scattering a bushel basketful of gold pieces to the crowds. Then somebody suggested that he charter a special train. Johnny thought it a good idea and took it up. He carried a big min-

strel troupe with him. They traveled around the country wherever the spender's inclination turned and whole towns turned out to greet him in wonder and envy.

The small towns didn't appeal to Coal Oil Johnny. He got the fever to spend money before a larger audience. So he headed his train for Philadelphia and put up at the best hotel. Not liking the way the hotel was run, he bought it for a day and hung out a big canvas sign: "Everything Free."

Of course this couldn't keep up forever. Nobody ever has been able to figure out just how much money Coal Oil Johnny blew in. A conservative estimate would be three quarters of a million dollars. But he worked fast and kept the country guessing.

After the smoke cleared away, Johnny dug ditches for a dollar and a quarter a day. And here the Sunday school papers leave him, pointing him out as a horrible example.

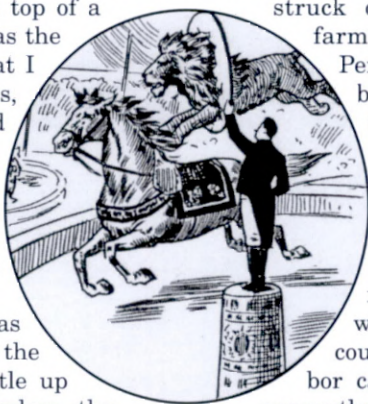
Coal Oil Johnny did not die in the poor house as the moralists claim. A farm near Franklin, Pa. was saved from the spending cyclone, and on this he settled. Rumors are afloat that he is still living and on the same farm. But he will contribute no more to fame. His chapter in history closed over forty years ago.

Just like a lot of other people--take their money away and they are of no further interest to the public. And yet in that country, at least, there never was but one John Steele. And as for Meadville, Oil City and Titusville, they each seemed to be a little world of their own. But little attention was given to law and order, and the saloons and dance halls kept open all night. For a time large fortunes were made and lost in a few days, and while the show got \$1 for admission and made plenty of money, people with the show always are glad to get out and away from the surroundings of these places.

In my letter last week I misquoted Walter C. Du Brock when I said that he had bought the Madame Marintette string of high school horses. It should have read the Higgins high school horses, which are said to be as clever as any in the country.

August 29, 1914

Last Sunday morning Fred Collier came to Janesville to spend the day



with his father, and he put in a busy time shaking hands with old friends. At the present time Fred is one of the few prominent in show business that calls Janesville his home. He is first assistant to Rhoda Royal, the greatest trainer of high school horses in the business. Mr. Royal has seventy head of these horses, thirty-five head of which are with the Sells-Floto and Buffalo Bill Show, and the balance are leased to different shows for the season.

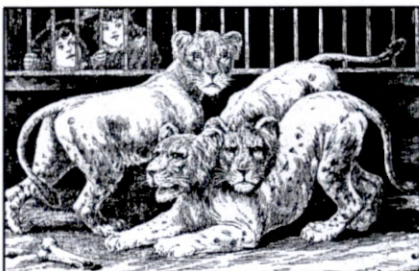
Fred Collier has been with Mr. Royal for four or five years and can handle any part of the work as well as Mr. Royal himself. Fred told me some interesting stories of the season's work, two of which were the showing of the Sells-Floto and Buffalo Bill and Ringlings in Columbus, Nebraska on the same day. Columbus is a town of some six thousand inhabitants, and for two large shows to show there side by side on the same day, looks to me like throwing away money. The only ones that can be benefited by such work are the lot owners and billposters and the newspapers. During such times as these, the show will certainly give up their money. And again, a week or ten days later, both shows met at Des Moines, Iowa and showed there day and date.

Fred Collier left again for the show Monday morning and joined them in Milwaukee. In my times in the business we showed in Philadelphia day and date for two weeks with the Barnum show at opposition. Both shows made a torchlight parade before their opening. The Forepaugh show showed on North Broad Street and the Barnum on South Broad.

P. T. Barnum as an attraction was billed to make a speech at the opening of the show every evening. But this proved to be a bad move on the part of the Barnum people, for Adam Forepaugh in all the years he had been in the business and the millions he had made, had invested it all in real estate in Philadelphia, and Philadelphians had a warm spot in their hearts for Adam Forepaugh, and thousands of people attended the show that year that never went to the show before just to prove their loyalty to their townsman. But this was in the days when Adam Forepaugh and Barnum were fighting for supremacy in the business. It

was not until the summer of '84 that peace was declared and the division of the country decided upon between the two great shows.

Now at the fairs all over the country some of the best acts in the show



business are to be seen. Last week at the Evansville fair nine Arabs of the Ben Ali troupe did some of the finest work ever seen either in the circus or on the fair grounds. This week at Madison a troupe of five Japs performed many almost impossible feats before a large audience as well as two clowns that are continually working between heats of the races.

The Hagenbeck-Wallace shows encountered a tornado at their Sturgis (Mich.) stand August 13, which left destruction in its wake. At about 2:20 in the afternoon, shortly after the introductory pageant had circled the hippodrome, a huge gust of wind and rain swept across the circus lot, loosening some and pulling out others of the stakes on the grand stand side, which loosened the whole side, causing consternation among the audience, hurting more than a score and resulting in a scalp wound to one of them, a septuagenarian who died the day after.

With such speed did the wind-storm strike the show grounds that there was no time to reinforce the bracing of the tent. Men and boys grabbed the guy ropes in an effort to hold down the tents, without avail. The canvas over the heads of the reserved seat section was flapping lustily over the crowd's heads and this together with the falling of the stakes caused excitement in the audience, which partook of the nature of a panic. In the menagerie only one cage was overturned. Two lions escaped, but Emil Schwyer, the animal trainer, captured and returned them to their enclosure before they were able to cause any alarm.

Not a single member of the show was hurt, and the big top was the

only tent damaged. It had twenty-seven holes of varying sizes torn in it, but these were repaired the same evening by three sailmakers who were brought on from Chicago. Despite the fact that many stakes were pulled loose, the big top did not fall as had been reported. Charles Hageman made a statement to the effect that the damage done was light. By three o'clock the show had started again and the performance was completed. In the evening it came off as per schedule to a curious and heavy patronage.

Early Thursday morning of this week the [one of the] advertising car[s] of the Ringling Show came to Janesville to finish up the last touch of the billing of the great show, which is to come one week later. This car is the largest one I have ever seen in the business and is fitted expressly for the work. It is seventy-two feet long with sleeping compartments for more than twenty people and carries tons of different kinds of paper for billboards and lithograph, all of which are used for the last billing of the show. The car is in charge of C. G. Snowhill whose home is at Bellville, Ill. Mr. Snowhill joined the Ringling show twenty-one years ago. He had been in their employ ever since he was eighteen years old. He had twenty men under him in this work and he is one of the busy men of the show from morning until night. Two to four men are sent out on the country roads which they make by team and who have routes from thirty-five to fifty miles. These men for the most part are men of experience that know the business from A to Z.

Mr. Snowhill's car left here at 5:10 last evening for Rockford and several of his men were left behind as it was impossible for them to take the long trips and get back in time to take the car. Those that are left behind took the 9:15 interurban for Rockford where they will take up practically the same work in that city today. Mr. Snowhill's first work in the business was under the direction of A. G. Ringling himself, who at that time had charge of the same work that Mr. Snowhill is directing today.

It is fair to say that Mr. Snowhill kept his eye on his lesson carefully or he would not be where he is today, which is one of the best positions ahead of the great show. All these

men who are agents in the summer have gone into hall show business as agents ahead of the different attractions, but the great changes of late to the "movies" will make a lot of difference to those boys this winter. And now as the great show will be here next Thursday, you had better get up early and hitch old Dobbin to the chaise and go to the circus and the forty clowns will do the rest. For you all well know the saying of mourning alone, so go where thousands will laugh with you and spend one more day on the road to happiness.

September 5, 1914

Well, the world's greatest show has come and gone. At the Five Points at day break Thursday morning, the unloading commenced and the same high classed tactics that have always characterized the management of the Ringling show was carried out to the letter. The thousands of people crowded around the runs to watch their work could hardly hear a loud word spoken by the employees of the show, and it was only a few minutes later that the beautiful eight and ten horse teams were driven to their places on the different wagons and were soon on their way to the show grounds. It is fair to say that as high class a lot of horses of all kinds were never before seen in Janesville.

The first wagons taken to the grounds were those belonging to the commissary department, or the cook tent, as it is known in show business. This department alone is quite a city in itself, and for the past seventeen years has been in the charge of Allie Webb, as he is familiarly known about the show. Mr. Webb has a small tent just outside the main entrance to the cook tent, which serves as his business office where he has a desk and all bills are either O.K.'d or paid at this place.

I was shown through the entire hotel, for hotel it is, although they serve only those connected with the show. There I met the head chef, William Hummell, whose home is at Indianapolis, Ind. This man has charge of all the work of preparing the meals for the people. Assisting Mr. Hummell in his work are fifteen cooks, six dish washers, one fireman for the ranges and four steam table men and seventy-four waiters.

The following will give you an idea

of the amount of food used every day in this department: 4,500 pounds of meat, 150 pounds of coffee, 1,000 pounds of sugar, 700 loaves of bread, 100 pounds of butter, 25 bushels of vegetables, 15 cases of corn and peas, 60 pounds of lard, 10 cases of eggs, 100 pounds of crackers, 60 gallons of fresh milk, 3 cases of canned milk, 2 cases of breakfast food, and in extreme hot weather, 5 tons of ice and 1 box of lemons. All this is necessary for a day in this vast department, and Mr. Webb told me that at the three meals, he would serve between thirty-three and thirty-five hundred meals every day.

For the horses, lions, camels and animals with the show they will use between ten and eleven tons of hay, 300 bushels of oats, 1,500 tons of bran and 3 tons of straw. Everything in this department is furnished every day in the town in which they show.

Lew Graham, announcer and side show manager.

In the cook tent I met Grant Wittington, who is the headwaiter and also had quite a visit with "Daddy" Voris, who is the bread and pastry cook.

The crowds commenced to arrive early and by twelve o'clock noon, there were thousands of people on their way to the show grounds anxious to get the first chance to enter the great show after the doors were open. At the main entrance of the show was Charles Ringling, the only one of the brothers with the show, also Edward P. Norwood, the press agent, both of whom were only too anxious to see that the people were all cared for. Mr. Ringling met many old time friends, including George Hall, familiarly known as popcorn George of Evansville, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Gollmar of the Gollmar Brothers shows who are now in western Iowa. Mr. Gollmar is a cousin of the Ringlings, and he and his wife took great interest in watching each and every act as much as though it was their first show of the season. Several friends of the Ringlings of

Baraboo were there, including Charles Ringling's wife, daughter and son, who will spend a few days with the show.

After the afternoon performance, Mr. Norwood, the press agent, took a few friends back through the dressing room to show them how that part of the show was made up, but as we were a little late there was but few people there.

I met several friends including Lewis Graham, known as the man with the voice. It is he who makes the announcements and also the special acts in the show. Lou's voice certainly seems to carry to every part of the immense tent. I also met Charlie Rooney, boss hostler, the successor of the late Spencer Alexander, better known in Janesville as Delavan, also George Law, Rooney's assistant and many others who are heads of departments and high class in their work, and it is these kind of men that makes it possible to run a great institution of this kind.



They show twice a day and perhaps run 100 miles or more to put up in the next town and seldom ever lose a stake or the smallest particle used with the show.

Charles Ringling told me an interesting story Thursday of his first visit to the old Adam Forepaugh show that was in 1887. He said as it was a strictly business mission he was on, he walked by the ticket wagon, went straight to the front door where Adam Forepaugh and his son, Adam Jr., were sitting and introduced himself as one of the Ringling brothers. Mr. Forepaugh said, "Yes, I have heard of you boys and understand you are getting quite a show together."

"I said to Mr. Forepaugh," said Charles Ringling, "that we had been doing fairly well and that my objective in visiting him was to see if I could not buy a few animals. At this Mr. Forepaugh invited me inside the menagerie and said that he had a surplus of nearly everything and afterwards showed me the elephants, lions and different animals that I was anxious to buy. He said, 'I will

give you prices that are cheap enough and anything that you want in my menagerie that you think is cheap enough. just pick what you want, and as far as the money is concerned, you can take your time in paying for them.' This certainly sounded good to me coming as it did from one of the greatest showmen in the world and one that I never had met in a business way before.

"From that time on," Mr. Ringling said, "he was one of our staunchest friends, and although the sturdy old German did not treat me at first as cordially as some people, he proved to be the kind that we could tie to and from that time on he was always our friend."

Mr. Ringling said so far this season the show had done a good business and from here the show was gradually working southward. From Janesville the show goes into Illinois for several days, from there into Indiana, then to Kentucky and on September 26th, they will be at Bristol, Tenn. They expect to close the season early in November, but the exact date is not yet fixed.

The show as a whole is certainly one that the state of Wisconsin can well be proud of. Everywhere around the show there seemed to exist an air of courtesy and it is these little attentions that gather the moss and make friends of patrons, although you meet the people but once in two or three years. But the barrier is down boys, come again.

One of the old timers with the show, although a young man, is M. H. Rubein of Baraboo. Mr. Rubein joined the show before he was out of his teens and has grown up in the business. For some years past he has had charge of the lemonade and candy privileges with the show. He had about twenty men under him and this during both performances is one of the busy places around the show. A few years ago Mr. Rubein married the only daughter of the late Spencer Alexander, better known to Janesville people as Delavan. Mrs. Rubein spent the day in Janesville with her husband and her many friends here, and she will return to Baraboo Saturday evening where she makes her home with her mother.

On the evening of the Ringling show, after bidding some friends good-bye, I started down town and had only gone a short distance when I overtook an old gentleman and was soon in conversation with him. I asked him if he was connected with the show, and he said: "Yes, Mr. Watt, I have been with the Ringlings for 15 years and have known you by sight all those years." And when I told him that I did not recollect him, "Well," he said, "I was a driver with the show for 14 years, and last winter when the boys were arranging the show for the summer, they called me into the office and said, 'Daddy, we are going to give you a new job.' You see," said the old man, "I will be 70 years old next birthday and the boys thought that I was too old a man to climb up on top of the high wagons and drive over the road from the lots late at night; so they gave me a position taking tickets at the main entrance to the reserved seats and any evening when there is a light house, I can go to the cars and go to bed."

I told him it was certainly nice of them to make this change for him, for he had been in the business so long, that it meant more to him than any other kind of work.

The old gentleman said, "Yes, I want to stay there as long as I am able to make myself useful."

One of the most amusing things to me in the show was the old elephant that played the bass drum with his tail. After the trainer had arranged all the elephants and put their instruments in position, the old fellow that was to play the bass drum just before they started, turned around and took a look at the drum to see if it was located within easy reach, so that he might not miss it.

Inside the Sells-Floto Circus big top in 1914.



Yet many people think that these animals do not know.

Last month when the Sells-Floto and Buffalo Bill Show showed in Des Moines, Iowa, Colonel Cody, Buffalo Bill, was the guest of honor at a luncheon given by the Chamber of Commerce. After the luncheon, Colonel Cody gave them a thirty-minute talk on his frontier life in the early '60's while he was with the Indians under the direction of General Phil Sheridan. Colonel Cody always gets a warm welcome in Iowa, for he was from there, and it was there that he spent his boyhood days.

Arrangements were made for a conference early this week between representatives of the owners of the Wallace-Hagenbeck Shows and a special committee of the Chamber of Commerce, at which the proposal that the circus make its winter headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, will be discussed. The chamber committee is composed of Fred I. Willis, O. D. Hasket, F. C. Jordan, James A. Collins and Otto P. Deluso.

The question of operating a winter circus in the event the show decides to make Indianapolis its headquarters will receive attention. The state fair ground has been suggested as the site for winter quarters and it has been pointed out that the coliseum affords exceptional advantages for the presentation of a circus in winter. Charles Downing, secretary of the State Board of Agriculture, says there would be little difficulty in arranging for the same.

Gunda, the gigantic Indian elephant on exhibition at the New Zoological Park, nine feet high and weighing eight thousand pounds, will spend the rest of his life in chains instead of ambling through the shady walks of the Park with children on his back, as he was wont to do, because of an almost successful attempt made recently to kill his keeper. For some time the elephant had been manifesting individual antipathies—showing fury when certain persons approached him. These persons kept out of his way. It was on his favorite keeper, Bill Thurnan, that he finally vented his rage, going for him with tusks and struck him down in a moment when Thuman was unprepared and almost crush-

September 12, 1914

ing the life out of him before help came. After this exhibition of criminal intent, Dr. Hornaday, director of the park, ordered him put in chains. Chained he will remain, therefore, for the rest of his life, despite the pleas of sentimentalists who are continually writing the authorities asking them that he be given his freedom.

On September 2nd, three sections of Sells-Floto and Buffalo Bill Caravan were hemmed in by waters and storm-torn tracks on Lake Shore. Hundreds of people who thronged to Kalamazoo yesterday to attend the combined attractions of the Sells-Floto and Buffalo Bill circus were doomed to disappointment, for the weather man pasted a black eye on the "rain or shine" statements so flagrantly displayed from the multi-colored lithographs and stalled the trains of the big aggregation within twelve miles of Kalamazoo, and no amount of contriving sufficed to provide a way out of the predicament.

With more than two thousand feet of track washed out along the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern railroad at various points between Otsego and Cooper and the three large circus trains hopelessly trapped between the breaks, there was no alternative. The Kalamazoo date was canceled and at an early hour this morning, it was held doubtful if the tracks could be cleared in time to land the aggregation in Battle Creek for the two engagements today. The circus trains left Grand Rapids shortly after midnight and about four o'clock the flooded portion of the tracks were reached near Otsego. Unwilling to turn back, the heavy caravans proceeded cautiously over the inundated rails in the belief that they could pass the dangerous spots before the danger became grave. The heavy strain proved too much for the weakened roadbed, however, and one by one, the engineers found themselves stalled above spread rails, unable to con-

tinue forward or to retreat. The leading train reached a point midway between Plainwell and Cooper, while the second was stalled just outside of Plainwell. The third train reached its limit at Otsego, and here the outfit remained throughout the day and night, hemmed in on all sides by water and unable for many hours to communicate with agents in Kalamazoo.

A report reached Kalamazoo early yesterday morning to the effect that the circus train had been ditched. Later came a report that two men and twenty horses had been killed in the wreck. Not until the circus management could communicate with local representatives was the report disclaimed and the real circumstances made known. A portion of the circus regalia and a part of the menagerie was unloaded at Plainwell during the day, but the whole was replaced in the cars late that night in anticipation of the onward move. Crowds thronged the streets awaiting the advent of the parade and not until late in the afternoon did the visitors resign themselves to the truth of the statement that the Kalamazoo date had been canceled.

September 19, 1914

In 1878, which was my first year in the business, the show opened the season at Delavan, Wisc. on May 3rd, and closed at Oregon, Ill. on October 13. While this made a short season, the show had been through the far west, where in those days towns were few and far between. So while the season had not been a long one, it had been a hard, tiresome one, and both the people and the horses and nearly everyone with the show was ready to hear of an early closing date.

Clown Pete Conklin.

George K. Steele, the advance agent, after billing Oregon, Illinois for October 13, came

back to the show to talk over the advisability of running one or two weeks longer. And while few of the people had winter jobs awaiting them, there was one man with the show who had an engagement for the entire winter at the big hippodrome in New York City at much more salary than he was getting with the circus. This was Peter Conklin, the clown whose home was in St. Louis, and as the hippodrome in New York had already opened, he was anxious to have the circus close as early as possible. Conklin took it upon himself to talk up an early closing date in the dressing room among all the performers.

Pete had written a new chorus to his song and rehearsed it in the dressing room with the other performers who always surrounded him when he was singing, and all would join in the chorus. It went something like this: "The season has been a long one, and we will all go home from Oregon, We'll all go home from Oregon."

But unbeknownst to poor Pete, the performers had gotten together and changed the chorus, and when it came time for him to turn and ask them all to join the chorus, much to Conklin's surprise, the chorus all sang, "We won't go home from Oregon."

This took Conklin so by surprise that he fell off of his pedestal, and here the song ended at the conclusion of one verse. This was simply to have a little fun with him. The next day Burr Robbins and George K. Steele concluded that the show would close the season at Oregon.

From here we drove across the country to Harvard, Ill. where we went into camp over night and reached the show's headquarters the next day. And although this was a short season, it was one of the most profitable that the show had ever seen, and in five months and ten days that it was on the road, it cleared up more than \$90,000, which was more than twice the value of the show. This simply goes to show the money that it is possible for even a small show to make that is well managed.

For many years back there have been seven Ringling brothers connected with their great shows, but up to a few years ago there were but five



of them who were the owners. August and Henry, up to a few years ago, were both salaried men who had no interest in the show. Gus, as he was known around the show, was the first of the brothers to die. He was connected with the advance all his life. No one knew the country and the work ahead of the show better than he. He died some five or six years ago. A few years ago Otto, another one of the brothers who had always owned an equal interest with the other brothers, also died. In Otto's will he provided for the widow and orphan[s] of his brother Gus, after which he willed his entire interest in the show to his brother Henry, who had always been a salaried man. So today there are still five of the Ringlings interested in the two great shows.

But like many other brothers, their ideas of home and country in which they wanted to stay, differed. John, who has always been the general agent ahead of the show, divides his time between his home in New York City and Ringlingville and Montana. Alfred T. built a beautiful home in New York where he spends most of his time in the winter. Charles, who was the only one of the Ringlings here with the show this season, built a beautiful home in Evanston. Henry, the youngest brother, lives in a handsome home of his own at Wilmette, another north shore suburb of Chicago.

So the only one of the brothers who has stuck to the old hometown is Albert, the oldest. Here he built one

Twenty-sheet Ringling Bros. Circus 1914 lithograph.

of the handsomest residences in the state, which is kept open the year round and is always in the charge of servants in the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Ringling. While these boys started in the business in a small way, they were never what might be called trailers in the business or copying after anyone else, but always had original high class ideas of their own which they carried out to the letter and always kept close watch on the public's interest and giving them everything that they promised.

These high-class spectacular productions which they have been giving for several years back were original with them. They spared no time or money in these productions in the way of music, Paintings and wardrobe for the same. In the production of "Joan of Arc" two years ago, the paintings and wardrobe alone cost more money than many of the smaller shows of today. The production this year of "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba" was even more expensive than the one of "Joan of Arc," but the cost was never taken into consideration.

This has been a season of misfortunes, accidents and elemental cataclysms thus far indeed. Just contemplate what havoc fire, water and wind have brought up to date. Ringlings lost 43 cars in a fire at Cleveland; Sells-Floto lost time and money by washouts; Hagenbeck-Wallace suffered several blow-downs in Michigan, Illinois and Missouri; Rice & Dore was blown by a cyclone at Cleveland; World at Home was blown down and other accidents; Hall's London Hippodrome Shows was washed out by heavy

rains, and the Old Dominion Concessioners were derailed in Canada. In fact almost every show has suffered more or less injury, but the above were the heaviest victims. 1914 will, therefore, be remembered. But it hasn't ended yet. Times are picking up; optimism pervades all business, and much money can be gathered before the snowbirds grow too thick upon the white-mantled meadows.

On Thursday evening of this week there was a reunion held in front of the Hotel Myers at which only five of the old veterans answered to the roll call. Now, these were not veterans of the war of the rebellion, neither were they of the Spanish-American variety, but they were veterans of the wagon show days of 1880. Those who answered to the roll call were Orin Bingham, of Bingham & Cable, who are now playing a musical engagement at the Apollo theatre in this city; Cash Williams, who for many years has been manager of Hoard's hotel at Lake Koshkonong; Lem Williams, who for some years has been connected with the George Hatch orchestra of this city; Al Smith, and D. W. Watt. Thursday evening was the first time in 34 years that these five had met together and a long talk of the hardships of the wagon show days was rehearsed.

One member of the company said, "You talk of the rough riders of today and of the wild west shows, they are not in it with some of the rough riding that we had to do over the rough roads of southern Illinois."

For it was in that state that the show traveled for nearly four months of that year. Many stories were told of different ones that had long been forgotten by the others. And while the meeting only lasted for a short time, it was enjoyed by everyone. When the parting came, it was with hope that they might all live to enjoy another reunion.

September 26, 1914

If the old rule in circus business is still in vogue, the people around the different large shows are anxiously waiting for the last issue of the route card for the season which will give them the closing date, and especially are those anxious that have engagements awaiting them for the winter months.



But there will not be as many engagements awaiting the performers as there has been heretofore, for hundreds of them have been in the habit of going to Europe and working in the high class vaudeville of the different countries over there. Also in this country, of the vaudeville houses, they have been turned into picture shows, with only a few of them using vaudeville acts.

In my visit with many of the people with the great Ringling show when they were here, I found that [they didn't know where] they would go or what they would do during the winter, while heretofore all the high class people in that work had engagements up till the opening of the big circus in the following spring. So not only have the moving picture shows of the country played havoc with their business, but the European war has absolutely barred them from all those countries. Yet many of them, even though they have no winter engagements, are just as anxious to have the show close; for on the average it has been a hard season with much rain, cold weather and more than their average allotment of accidents.

Today the Ringling Brothers have the honor of being the big producers of spectacular productions under canvas. In circus business it seemed to be left to them to put on such great productions as "Joan of Arc" and "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba," that years ago would have been though impossible; not only on account of the large expense, but in the matter of having room to produce such acts under canvas. In 1887, Adam Forepaugh in consultation with his advance agents finally concluded to open his show on Staten Island, across the bay from New York, about the middle of August for an engagement of at least four weeks and possibly for the balance of the season. The show landed on the Island on Thursday morning, and the balance of the week was taken up in getting ready to open at a matinee on Sunday afternoon.

For some years before that Adam Forepaugh had leased to the Kiralfy Brothers of New York elephants, camels and lions for the big spectacular productions, which they put on at different times and, in different large cities all over the United

States. At this particular time, just across the bay from New York City on Staten Island about 5 miles from where we were to show, the Kiralfy Brothers put on what was known as the "Fall of Babylon." This was produced in the open air, and seats were arranged like the seats in the large ballparks of the big cities today, in sort of a half moon shape for a capacity of 30,000 people, with box seats in front to accommodate many hundreds.

The Kiralfy's opened this show on Saturday evening before our matinee, which took place Sunday following in the afternoon. I drew up all the leases for the animals which the Kiralfys used in this production and, with Adam Forepaugh and his wife, witnessed the opening show.

Every seat in the great amphitheatre was occupied. It was said that 35,000 tickets were sold for the open-



ing show. There were 1,200 people connected with the show. The buildings, some of them five and six stories high, were built in a way that they could be lowered. When the crumbling of the buildings commenced, which represented the fall of Babylon, the trumpeting of the elephants, roaring of the lions with hundreds of calcium lights thrown on the great buildings, made it a beautiful sight to witness. This, without question, was the greatest show that the Kiralfys ever produced. For years before this, they had been famous all over the world as the big producers of spectacular pieces. But the "Fall of Babylon" did not prove a financial success, and it was said at the time that the Kiralfys lost more than \$100,000 on this venture alone.

In those days, though, there were different outlets for the surplus of animals around the large circuses in different ways which there does not seem to be today. Thus many of the small circuses would lease one or two elephants and two or three cages of

animals when they were not able to buy them outright. Adam Forepaugh at one time leased an elephant to a small show and in the contract was to receive so much a week rent and the elephant to be returned to Philadelphia at the close of the show in the fall. For a few weeks they kept up their payment, but later in the fall the show went South, where along in November, it stranded and Mr. Forepaugh not only lost the rental, but had to send a man south and pay up a big bill against the elephant and pay his transportation back to Philadelphia. This ended his leasing animals to small shows that were not responsible.

Three men are making arrangements in Chicago to open a one-ring show under canvas there early in the spring and play in different locations in the suburbs all next summer. One of the proprietors will be Stick Davenport who made his first debut as a rider in Janesville when he was only 10 years old in the old ring barn at the Burr Robbins' winter quarters in 1879. According to reliable information, Chicago will have a one-ring circus playing its lots all next season. The venture will be finished by Vic Hugo, manager of the Majestic Theater, Cedar Rapids, Ia.; Charles M. Marsh, general traveling representative of the Fair department of the West Virginia Military Academy, and Stick Davenport, well known in the circus world. It is the intention of those interested to make the organization practically a local one, keeping it in Chicago during the entire season.

The military authorities of Canada have recently made earnest efforts to procure some suitable horses for their army from the American circuses. The numerous managers have received letters giving in careful detail the requirements the horses must fill in order to be acceptable as artillery or cavalry mounts. It is understood some of the circus managements will take advantage of this opportunity to unload some old stock and to save the cost of wintering the same. The Canadian officials do not seem to consider that it would be a violation of our neutrality laws for the circus men to deliver these horses to some convenient point in the Dominion as is required by their specifications.

The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus has added another one to the long list of big days this season. On Labor Day at Springfield, Mo., the crowd was so enormous and the public so persistent upon procuring admission to the shows that a second afternoon performance was given, making three on the day. The management had not planned for three performances nor advertised the third show, but were forced to put on the extra exhibition and did so to most excellent financial returns. The ticket wagon for the first afternoon exhibition was closed at 1:45 p.m. The people kept coming and were so vehement in their declarations of disappointment that the extra performance was announced and thousands waited patiently for the conclusion of the first exhibition.

Louis E. Cooke is back with us once more, having reached New York Saturday, Sept. 12. The general manager of the London 101 Ranch Show appears to be in fine fettle and speaks modestly of the laurels he has added to his reputation through his handling of the Wild West during the recent critical period. Mr. Cooke journeyed at once to Newark, N.J., where he is again in personal control of his Continental Hotel.

On September 24 at Arkansas City (Kansas) Fair, Colonel Roosevelt was expected to be the feature attraction. Incidentally the Hagenbeck-Wallace Shows made their stand there on that date also and were to arrange for the Bull Mooser to speak between shows under the big top.

Forty-two years ago yesterday, Thursday Sept. 24, 1872, the P. T. Barnum show showed in Janesville, the lot being on Jackson St. near where the Jackson street bridge is located. The show traveled overland by wagons. It show had one giraffe, which was said to be the only one in America at the time. The show gave three exhibitions to crowded houses, the first show at 10 o'clock in the morning, the second at one o'clock in the afternoon and the third at 7 o'clock in the evening, and I think that was the only time that any circus ever gave three exhibitions in Janesville in one day. Did you attend that show?

October 3, 1914

In last week's issue of the

Billboard, a circus and theatrical journal, there appeared a picture of Billy Sunday, the noted evangelist, riding a small elephant belonging to the Sells-Floto and Buffalo Bill show. The famous evangelist was a visitor at the show in the afternoon and remained after the performance for a long visit with the people and told them many interesting anecdotes, among which were the following: "I used to play baseball. I used to fire on the railroads. I have loaned thousands of dollars to baseball players, actresses and actors and all kinds of people, and all the money I have ever been beaten out of in my life I have been beaten out of by church members."

With the exception of Johnny Baker and wife, Guy Weadick and Florence Ladue and William Sweeney, all that remained of Miller Brothers & Arlington's 101 Ranch Wild West that went to White City, London, returned today or will land Tuesday in the Atlantic transport *Minnewaka*. the Indians included a band that Miller Brothers sent to Sarraani's circus in Germany, and every last Red man has started back to the reservation.

Zach Miller returns with contracts to purchase 10,000 horses for the British Government and the money to pay for them is deposited in New York. Miller Brothers got their own price for horses commandeered out of their show at White City by the English government, this money serving somewhat as a recompense for their being compelled to abandon their London season and tour of the continent which the war suddenly dissipated.

Miss Mable Stark, a lion trainer, came near losing her life during the parade at Wyandotte, Mich. Due to a broken brake, the chariot occupied by three huge lions and the trainer was cut from the parade and placed at the street curbing until repairs could be made. A farmer boy on horseback rode his horse close to the cage and the lions immediately attempted to catch the

horse. Failing in the attempt, the beasts made a savage attack on Miss Stark, one of them fastening his teeth on the girl's lower limb, inflicting an exceedingly dangerous wound. The little trainer, never losing her nerve, pluckily fought off the attacking monsters and managed to drag herself behind the cage partition doors to safety. Three weeks in the hospital was the result after which Miss Stark returned to her work and is now "crutching it" around the show.

Many of the older citizens will recollect Jimmie DeMott and his family of riders who were here with the Burr Robbins show in the middle seventy's (sic) for two seasons. At that time Josie DeMott was just making her debut as a bareback rider, and it was in the same riding barn at Spring Brook where she spent many weeks practicing her act before she became famous in the arena. It is only in the last few years that Josie retired and has a beautiful home in Hempstead, L. I. A few days ago the following notice appeared in the *Billboard*: "Do all you boys know that Josie DeMott is very comfortably reposed in a real homestead at Hempstead, L. I.? Some house-some grounds-some stable-some little woman."

Let's not forget our good friend Pete Conklin who is passing a ripe old age in Brooklyn. Pete achieved one of the very best reputations as an old-time clown when the Joey was more a jester than he now is. Few of the one-ring clowns still remain, and certainly none can be found more hearty and hale than our beloved Pete.

Tiger trainer Mable Stark.



Speaking of the name Conklin brings back to mind our former brothers, Charlie and Theodore Conklin. Both traveled with the old Burr Robbins allied shows in 1879-80. Charlie passed away in 1895 and is buried at Mason City, Ia., while Theodore was killed traveling overland with a wagon show.

"Doc Bacon with the Ringling Bros. show, after the close of the circus season, will put out a minstrel show, featuring a big act in two settings. Twenty-one people and a 16 piece band, a 7 piece orchestra and Capt. Goulash, the Indian fighter, will be carried. The show will go south. The entire white top fraternity will rejoice to learn that Al Ringling, after almost a month's confinement at his home in Baraboo, is now able to be up and around and last week commenced his jaunts in his machine throughout Sauk county. Al G.'s breakdown was attributed to overwork.

For many years back in the privilege department for different circuses there was a man by the name of John Vance who, after spending some years in the business, finally drifted away and has been connected with the moving picture film companies for something like five years. Not long ago John Vance told the following story about his experience in the moving picture business which was said to happen in the south, and while it is a good story, there doesn't seem anyone ready to vouch for it.

"Down in one of the southern counties of Maryland the other day they hanged a white man or rather started to hang one. Now it was very unusual to hang a white man in this particular county, for 90 percent of the population is Negro. As hangings are public in that region, and as this particular one was a white man, a big crowd turned out. The prisoner had been lead out of the jail, stood up on the trap, his hands tied; he had said his last word, had made peace with his Maker; the black cap had been put on, the noose adjusted and the trap was already to be sprung, when someone yelled, 'Fire.'

"A fire, it seems, is more unusual than a hanging in that county and all put off for the blaze, a big tobacco barn a mile down the road, and left the prisoner standing on the trap unattended. An aged, belated Negro came shuffling along past the scaffold on his way to the fire, looked up, saw the man about to be executed was alone and observed from his hand, which remained exposed, that he was white.

"Say," said the old Negro, 'what you all doin' up there, white mahn?"

"I'm working for a moving picture show,' was the reply from under the black cap.

"What's you all gettin?" asked the old Negro.

"Oh, twenty-five dollars a day," said the white man.

"Law, law," exclaimed the old Negro, 'it beats all the way you white



folks do study up to make money-you all don't want to help does you?"

"Yes," said the white man, 'you might stand here a while so I can get my dinner.'

"The Negro consented, climbed up on the scaffold, untied the white man, who in turn tied up the Negro, adjusted the noose, put the black cap over the Negro's head and then proceeded to 'beat it.'

"After the fire was out, the sheriff and the crowd returned to the scaffold. They found the supposed prisoner still standing there waiting to be hanged. The sheriff sprang the trap, but the rope broke and the Negro, noose, black cap and all came tumbling down on the ground. As he got up on his feet he clutched off the black cap, looked around at the crowd and yelled, 'Say, white folks, look out what you all is doin.' You gwine to hurt somebody yet with this heah movin' picture business!"

October 10, 1914

One of the hardest problems to solve in the show business years ago was that of fixing the schedule of prices for the workingmen that would induce them to stay the season through. The average workingman at the opening of the season, when they were broke and anxious for the work, would be ready to sign any kind of an agreement to get started on the season's work; but after they had gotten

a little money, and the harvest fields were ripening, the men were scarce even at \$2.50 and \$3.00 a day. Many times these workingmen would labor in the harvest fields until show managers found it difficult to find men to move the show from one town to another.

One of the first things that I was asked to do my first year with the Forepaugh show was to put all the workingmen on contracts for the season. This meant hundreds of men, and twice as many contracts, for the men would hold one contract and the show together. But this was never done. I was not very long in showing Mr. Forepaugh the disadvantage of this kind of a contract; for while both signed, it was one-sided. No kind of a contract would hold the men unless they saw fit to stay. In case they quit, in some instances they would take the contract which they had saved to a lawyer and insist that they had not been used right. As a last resort, the show would be attached and they had to pay much money a good many times. So this kind of a contract, or rather an understanding, did not always prove satisfactory, and still at the time it seemed to work out as well as any.

I would not have it appear that I am endeavoring to uphold the faulty and unreasonable methods which some shows resort to in the matter of holdbacks, but shows like Barnum & Bailey, Ringling Bros., Sells-Floto, etc., have no intention or desire to do a workingman out of his wages. I am now, and hope always to be, in favor of liberal wages and absolute protection to the working people with traveling shows.

Regarding the hold-back proposition, I have seen some good and bad results from such contracts. Take the workingman's side first. In the spring they are anxious to join out and are perfectly willing to concede to the hold-back; for they know that every week there will be a little in the book for them which, if drawn, would probably be September. For men who wish to remain until the end of the season, this hold-back comes in mighty handy, at the end of the season they can figure on having a nice little sum coming, where otherwise they might possibly have only the last week's wages. Again, the

men who make trouble regarding the hold-back are generally the ones who cannot resist the temptation of spending every cent they get hold of. Such men would not have a dollar at the end of the season but for the hold-back. Had their wages been paid in full each week, they would be broke.

Of course, neither of these cases apply to a large number of the men who take care of their money. I knew a number of workingmen on the Barnum & Bailey and Ringling Shows who never thought of drawing a dollar during the season, getting it all in at a lump at the end. They found odd jobs to do around the show to earn change for tobacco and other necessities.

Now, the manager's side of the story. If they didn't hold out some as an inducement to the men to remain, there would be times (harvest time for instance) when the men would desert in droves. Then when a succession of rainy days occur, or in the fall when it gets chilly, the men begin to long for home and friends, or their regular jobs for the winter. If it were not for the hold-back, it would be impossible to keep enough men to handle the show at such times. I have known one of the big shows to have as much as \$4,000 in holdbacks. If it had not been that the show had held the money, many of the men would not have had enough money to go home and live for a week after the show closed.

As I said before, I do not uphold the show that takes advantage of the contract and does not live up to the intent manifested therein; for some managers have been known to get out of the payment of hold-backs, which was very wrong. It is absolutely necessary that the management have some guarantee that the men will remain throughout the season, but the old fashioned hold-back is not satisfactory. The most feasible plan, in my estimation, is to gradually increase the wages, and on each pay-day pay a little more, and not hire at any stipulated monthly or weekly wage with some part of same to be held back. There is no law prohibiting a weekly or monthly increase, and the last month or week the wages, may be ten times as great as the first month or week's wages.

The average workingman going on to the show in the spring, the distance they have to go, or the money they possess seems to never cut much of a figure. Every spring there are many of these people who pass through Janesville, and only this last spring an old timer was invited to get off of the blind baggage, as it is called, where he had been secreted for many miles. But this would not detain him very long for he would soon grab another train and be on his way again, probably to be put off at Madison.

And so it is that these men change cars much oftener than the man with a paid ticket.

This old man that was put off in Janesville wandered up the streets a little ways and asked for something to eat. The gentleman of the house invited him in and gave him a cup of coffee and a sandwich and was soon in conversation with him, trying to find out why he was beating his way through the country and if he had any destination in mind. The old man told him that he was on his way to Baraboo to join the Ringling Bros. show. He then asked him what he did around the show, and he said that he had been there several years as a driver and groom. This man knowing the boss hostler, asked the old man who he worked for. His ready reply showed that he was telling the truth. He then asked if he ever traveled with any shows other than the Ringlings. The old man said that before coming to the Ringling Show he had been with the Adam Forepaugh show several years and was there at the time Mr. Forepaugh died. The gentleman to whom the old man was talking asked him who the ticket agent and treasurer was at the time he worked there, and the old man looked up with a smile on his face and said, "Never mind, you know as well as I do. He lives here in this town and has paid me off hundreds of times, and he is the last man that I want to see." The same man well knew that it was only about 85 miles from Janesville to Baraboo and that he would surely be there on the job the next day. He said that he had spent the winter in Pittsburgh, and as he had only left there three or four

days before, he thought he was getting along pretty well.

Did you know that it is just 40 years ago last Wednesday, October 7th, that the Burr Robbins show closed the season here, showing afternoon and evening to crowded houses on the lot now occupied by the Schaller McKey Lumber Company? Early the next morning everything was taken to Spring Brook, which was to be the winter quarters of the show in the future. At Spring Brook for many weeks carpenters and masons had been busy



getting the large barns ready for the horses and the animal barn ready for the menagerie. This was their first winter at their new home, and it was here that the show made its winter quarters up to the time that it passed into other hands.

The following is a special cable sent to this country from London and will be of interest, showing to what stress the European circus men are put.

"A well-known showman of London has received curiously interesting news from Hamburg concerning the famous Hagenbeck menageries. It is rumored that two of the brothers Hagenbeck have been killed in battle, a large number of animal keepers and trainers have been called to war and difficulties of the gravest kind gradually arose in this picturesque colony of jungle people. When the meat supply failed, certain of the less valuable specimen deer and mountain goats were shot to supply the lions and tigers with meat. An English keeper has succeeded in sending a letter to London which says that valuable elks were being slaughtered to feed tigers, while lions, jaguars, leopards and other meat eaters were receiving daily chunks cut from the carcasses of costly spring buck and equally valuable sheep from Tibet.

"There were numerous tragedies in the reptile cages. A large boa constrictor was discovered digesting his female companion. Prior to meeting her fate, she herself sated her appetite on a younger and less lengthy sister inhabitant of the which was a third inhabitant of the glass-fronted lair."



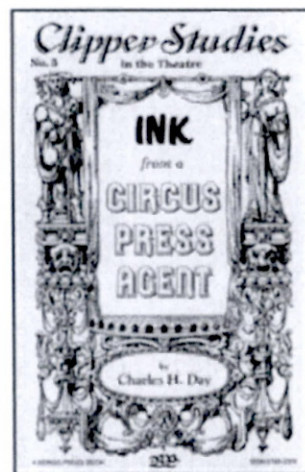
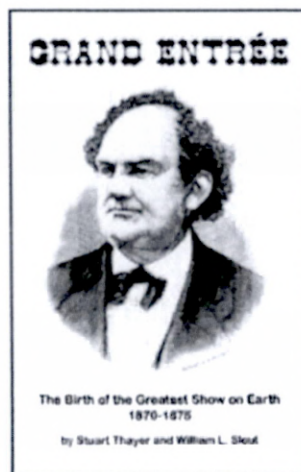
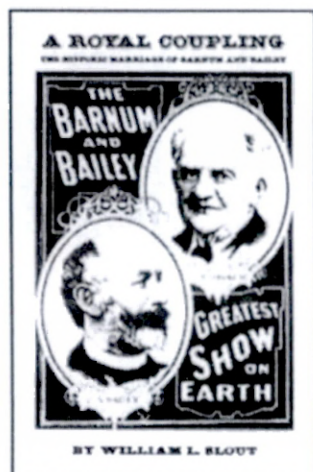
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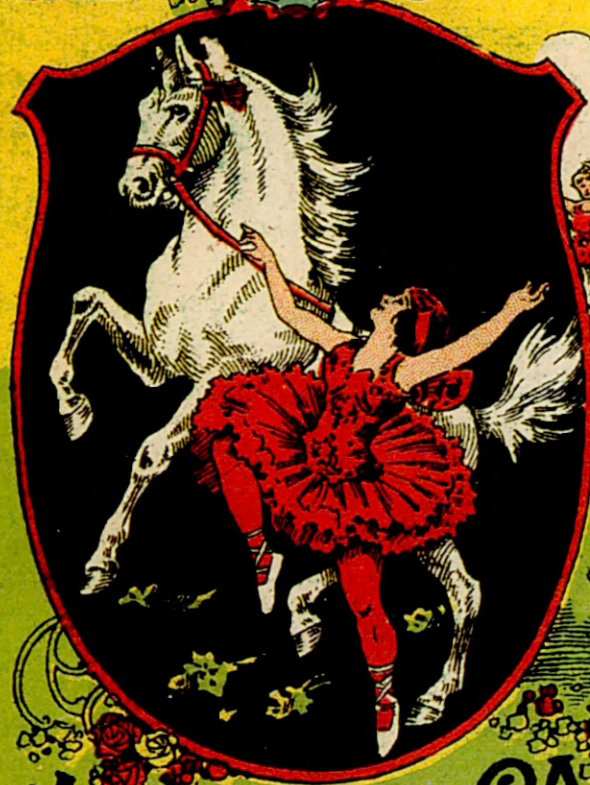
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